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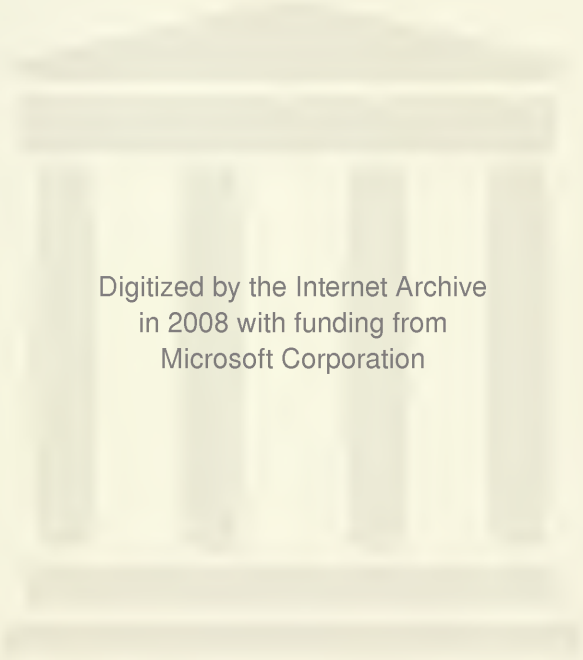

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I SOMETIMES THINK

ESSAYS FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE

BY

STEPHEN PAGET

"OUR AFFECTIONS AND BELIEFS ARE WISER THAN WE; THE BEST THAT IS IN US IS BETTER THAN WE CAN UNDERSTAND; FOR IT IS GROUNDED BEYOND EXPERIENCE, AND GUIDES US, BLINDFOLD BUT SAFE, FROM ONE AGE ON TO ANOTHER."—STEVENSON'S *VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE*: THE DEDICATION TO HENLEY.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1916

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TO MY WIFE

In the rush of your work this year, for the wounded, the School for Mothers, the Hospital, me and the children and the grandchildren, our Belgian guests, and the many lame dogs whom you help over stiles—and all the housekeeping and letterwriting and backgardening and planning and saving—work which often made me feel not only a lame dog but an idle dog—still you found time to read these essays, and to advise me over them. Here they are, "the potty essays," as I used to call them: fruits of idleness, slightly soured by ill-health, not ripened and warmed by the generous sun of hard work. The fruits of your work are sweeter than the fruits of my leisure. But I have got some work now, and I shall be away at it, when these essays come out. So I have put this half-page here, just to please you: and Oh my! How glad I shall be to see you again.

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PREFACE

Among the titles which youth bestows on age, there is one that I covet and hope to obtain from that fount of honour, the grandchildren. It is the title of Old Fossil. Youth, properly impatient of all specimens which it does not collect, specimens which were old before it began to be young, regards fossils as things altogether silent and indifferent to what is going on round them. As a matter of fact, they are aggressive, contradictious creatures, always spoiling for a fight. It was fossils, in Lyell's days, that set Science and the Bible at odds: they brought down the old Biblical chronology like a house of cards: they re-stated Creation. Fossilized skulls, with foreheads villainous low, grin with pleasure when they hear the anthropologists disputing over them. Fossils love to refute popular beliefs, and to upset comfortable theories: they are what nurses call downright aggravating: that is their humour, to prove themselves right: and their formula is *I told you so, and you wouldn't believe me.* Thus, they are a type of age informing, correcting, and scoring off youth. And

though I have not yet received my title, I reckon myself Old Fossil designate, and give myself airs, anticipating what I have waited so long to deserve.

A proud man I shall be, to put O.F. after my name. Not only will I challenge youth to reconsider its theories. I will bear witness to that remote time, before I was fossilized, when I swam free, a little ascidian in a vast ocean. All round me simple but majestical forms of life, now extinct, enjoyed themselves, each after its kind: we had a grand time, they and I together. From my glass-case, I will not cease to represent that period which already, to youth, is palæozöic: I will tell of its greatness, and will be thankful that I belong to it.

That is what I mean to be. What do you mean to be? You, who now swim free—some folk think that you swim too free—what will you be, when the time comes for you, even you, in your turn, to be fossilized? The gummed label and the glass-case are waiting for you, and will have you at last. *Quod es eram, quod sum eris.* We shall be near neighbours, you and I: our adjacent cases will touch: I of the period before the War, you of the period after the War. Between us, the world's upheaval, the deluge. You will bear witness to the changes wrought by that earthquake and flood: to the shattering of old forms of life, the driving of new lines of cleavage deep into the fabric of the world.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
1.	The World, Myself, and Thee	1
2.	The Beauty of Words	16
3.	Handwritings	33
4.	The Way of Science	50
5.	Moving Pictures	68
6.	London Pride	86
7.	Unnatural Selection	113
8.	*Si Monumentum Requiris*	125
9.	The Next Few Years	141

I

THE WORLD, MYSELF, AND THEE

THESE five words have been wandering, hand in hand, ever so long, up and down the paths of my brain: they got in before my brain was out of the nursery. Perhaps that is why they still seem to me young: as if, like Peter Pan, they could not grow up. Some words age quickly and die soon, or become invalids, useless to society: but these have kept their youth, though they are more than two hundred years old, and have walked my mind for fifty, like children in country lanes where no traffic disturbs them. Only, as Peter Pan reveals to the astonished Hook, all of a sudden, the whole kingdom of everlasting youth, so these five words reveal the whole kingdom of all thought and all things: all that we have, all that we believe, and all that we are. Plainly, this is going to be a mighty serious essay. Let me say, first, what bit of the world, at this moment, is just in front of myself.

I am in a garden, which goes down to the sea.

By the calendar, May is not yet come: by the sunshine, June is here. The green of the leaves, the slope of the lawn, the light and shade, outline and colouring, of a near oak, the pattern of its shadow over the grass, the delicate network of branches, now moving, now still—all these, in the quiet and sunshine, make a foreground too good for words. The garden hides from me a road and a strip of shingle: I look straight through branches at headlands, islands, and sea. No need here for guide-book talk: adjectives are of no use at all: *l'adjectif, c'est l'ennemi du substantif.* I will only say that this bit of the world is very beautiful.

I cannot analyse its beauty: nor could anybody. But the point is, that I cannot fully enjoy its beauty. Nor could anybody. You might roll all the world's artists and poets together, all its prophets and saints and visionaries, roll them all into one; and that one magnificent creature would still be unable to take-in the full beauty of the view from this garden. In the very act of giving itself to him, it would go on, somehow, holding itself back from him. He would stop somewhere: it would stop nowhere. And, what is more, he would not be ashamed of saying that he could not take it all in. Ordinary mortals might be, but he would not: indeed, he would find pleasure in declaring that it was altogether beyond him.

Fools, and fools only, think that they see all that there is to be seen, when they are looking at a flower-

bed or a wood or a sunset. If you want to pay a compliment to the beauty of Nature, a compliment equal to the occasion, you ought, really, to die of the shock of it: just say *Oh my* and expire. Nothing less counts for anything. Nature is tired of hearing people say What a fine sunset, What a pretty wood, We mustn't be late for dinner. But if you could manage to fall dead at her feet, struck by her beauty as by lightning, it would be a fine way out of life. But it would puzzle a coroner's jury to have to bring in their verdict, Died by the direct visitation of the beauty of Nature.

From this end we are saved not by self-control, nor by commonsense, but by our blindness, our impotence to see what is staring us in the face. You know the story of Turner and the old lady. Mr. Turner, says she, I never can see those beautiful colours in things, which you put in your pictures. *No, ma'am*, says he, *and don't you wish to God you could?* But Turner himself could neither paint all the beauty that he saw, nor see all the beauty that he desired to see: and when we think that we are most enjoying the beauty of Nature, we are still trying to empty the Atlantic by dipping into it with a teacup.

Here I am saying again what I have said elsewhere: but this fact, that the world is beautiful, is for me the fact of all facts. I build my faith on it: not on the bare fact that the world is here, but on the fact that the world is so delightful to look at, now

that it is here. I can imagine, if I try hard, a world of dull tints and stupid outlines, with no more claim to good looks than a house in Portobello Road might care to make: without fantasy of shapes, without riot of colours; its mountains all smooth like Primrose Hill, its valleys as flat as pavement and gutter. In this nightmare of a world, all the singing-birds have the same note, all the men and women are plain, and all the flowers smell of nothing. This world not being here, I can say without profanity that, if it were, it would afford us no evidence of God, none whatever. It would be just the sort of world that could and would come of itself. Happily, it did not come. What did come, is a world positively reeling and blind-drunk with beauty. I can imagine some sort of a world coming of itself, spinning itself solid out of gases which had come of themselves: but I cannot imagine such a world adorning itself as a bride for the bridegroom, which is what the real world is always doing: still less can I imagine it getting drunk on its own beauty.

Some people think of the world in such a poor-spirited way, as a big geological specimen, with a central cavity, and a surface hard and flat for us to live on. It was got ready for us by the slow expenditure of physical forces: it was stocked with vegetables and animals, in a very tentative way, by the methods of natural selection and survival of the fittest. So soon as it was fairly prepared for our habitation, a

notice was put up, To Let Furnished: and we came and took the premises on a long lease. The accommodation was ample: and we had the produce from the farm, the dairy, and the kitchen-garden. We have found this arrangement satisfactory: we have got quite fond of the place, and shall be sorry to leave it: and it suits the dear children remarkably well.

Of all wrong ways of regarding the world, this surely beats the record, to think of it as if it were lodgings or apartments. The reason why it had to be made for us is that we had to be made for it. The world has something to say to us, and we had to be made, so that the world might have somebody to say it to. The world has something to be done, and we had to be made, so that the world might have somebody to do it. The world has something to be learned, to be suffered, to be won: and we had to be made, so that we might learn, suffer, and win. It bears the marks of its intentions toward us. And one of these marks is its beauty, repeated in a million ways, over and over again, in its colours, outlines, forms, and contrasts.

Here this essay was hung-up for some days, and I take it down and set it going again, for I have a new text: indeed, I have two. Where I am now, everything is so beautiful that I sit and stare, instead of writing. Devonshire, both places: but here is a vision of such beauty that a man just looks and

looks, and says to himself, To think of being here, while better men are wounded or dying, thousands of them. It is more than drunk with beauty, it is mad with beauty. To define true madness, what is't but to be nothing else but mad? No man in his senses could say how beautiful this bit of Devonshire is. That is one of my texts: the other is the kindness of the friends who have lent me their house here, and the kindness of the doctors, whose care and skill have been given to me with generosity as extravagant as Nature herself.

Do not be offended by all this talk in the first person. Every library is full of descriptions of the beauty of Nature and the loving-kindness of man: besides, if you want more, you can write them for yourself. But so many of these descriptions are impersonal: they look outside self, not into self.

Consider the facts of the case. To begin with, mark me down at the lowest possible figure. If there be anything less than a point, let me be that irreducible minimum. Whittle me down as near as you can to nothing: one of the millions of millions of living things which now happen to be here: something which is only just not nothing. That is a true estimate of my importance to the universe—and of yours. Have you done it? The lower you value me, the better it will suit my argument. Have you got me so small that you cannot get me smaller? Well now, see what comes of your whittling.

Here is one of the least of little things: an atom, a dot, a cipher, a microscopic something: there are millions of them. On this one point, the beauty of the world is concentrated. To me it is addressed and adjusted: in me it is created and maintained. From this verandah at this moment—nobody else here, and no sound but the wind blowing and the birds singing —I receive into myself, and put together in myself, all these random consignments of light and shade, colour and outline and contrast, nearness and mid-distance and horizon, which become, in me, the view from the verandah. It is I, who put them together. They could no more put themselves together than the letters at the General Post Office could sort themselves and tie themselves in bundles. I must be here, to arrange and unite this chaos into a view. It is nothing, till I make it something. In a field, on my right hand, are three cows. I confess that they seem to imperil the strength of my argument. All animals are an everlasting and impenetrable mystery to all of us. Are they, like me, arranging and uniting in themselves their own view of Devonshire? I believe that they are. But I feel sure that they are not admiring, as I am, the near apple blossom, and the far hills of Dartmoor against the sky. It is all for me: it for me, and I for it. Really and truly, this bit of Devonshire, if it be indeed mad with beauty, has gone mad for love of me: not for love of the cows. Even if I were positive that the cows

are doing what I am doing, they certainly are not doing it so well.

Now, if I were the Creator of the Universe, it would be natural enough that Devonshire should wish to please me. But you have been saying, with perfect truth, that I am only just not nothing. And I ask you, Is it likely that any bit of the world would fall madly in love with next to nothing? You know it is not. Then why is Devonshire behaving in this extraordinary way?

Please follow me closely here: you easily can: you and I are equally wise, when it comes to a matter of faith. Catch hold of my argument anywhere, by its head or its tail or its skirts: only, catch hold of it. I say that the popular phrases about God and Nature are shot wide of the mark which they ought to hit. "There must be a God, because the world is beautiful." Never use a phrase like that: say always, "There must be a God, for here am I admiring the beauty of the world." Nothing in the world is beautiful, till somebody comes along who is able to admire the beauty of it. When that happens, Nature says to her Maker, *Do introduce him to me.* As in a ball-room you and your partner are introduced to each other, so Nature and Man are introduced to each other by the Master of the Ceremonies of the Universe. He so creates and maintains us that it is possible for the beauty of Nature to be created and maintained in us.

Dear brother or sister, this is one of my old sermons: I fear that you may have heard it before: and I still have to expound my other text, which is the kindness of my friends.

There are many people who fail to be surprised at the existence of friendship. They are glad of it on occasions of high intensity—some friend sees them through a difficulty or helps them out of a disgrace, and they say that a friend in need is a friend indeed—but they take for granted the amazing fact that friendship does exist. They seem to think that a man is bound to have friends, as he is bound to wear clothes, because he is always meeting other men: there are friends to be had, as there are clothes to be had: it is not a man's way to go naked in London, nor to go friendless through life: there is no mystery about friendship, no more than there is about a lounge suit: they get both when they want them, and go leaping and praising God neither for the one nor for the other. It is possible, though it is not probable, that some of them, at home, keep up the old fashion of grace before meals. What can be in the mind of a man who takes friendship for granted, but formally acknowledges the Hand of Providence over a dish of cutlets for dinner? Not that the existence of the cutlets is not amazing: it is altogether amazing, if you contemplate it in the spirit of philosophy: but a man has no right to give thanks over his food unless he gives them over his friends.

Imagine it possible to set a friendship, as we set a cutlet, under a dish-cover. What form of grace would you say over it? There it is, in front of you: and of course you must say your grace before you lift the dish-cover. I invented, some years ago, an excellent grace for solitary meals: it was thoroughly pious, without committing me to say more than I was really feeling. You cannot use it at big dinner-parties, nor at breakfast: but you could not have a better grace for lunch all by yourself. *Thank Heaven, whatever it is, it's not mince with an egg on the top.* Of course, if you like that combination, you must name some other dish, abhorrent to you: the principle remains the same. But we could hardly apply it to our friendships. Of course, we can if it pleases us. Somebody is in the dining-room: would not give his name: said that he wanted to surprise you. Then you say grace. *Thank Heaven, whoever it is, it's not So-and-so: he never comes here now.* But how grudging and stupid, to say no more than that. Go down to the dining-room with some form of words more alert and less flat-footed. *For what I am going to receive, make me truly thankful.* Surely you can say that much without sacrifice of common-sense. Or again, *Non nobis, Domine.* What is wrong with *Non nobis*? Unhappy scrap of Latin, fallen on evil days: I have heard it chanted, at a City dinner, by four singers: they sang the grace, I ate the dinner: therefore, it was not they who were taking

the Name of the Lord their God in vain, it was I. Read Lamb's essay on Grace before Meat: read it again and again, till you wellnigh have it by heart:

> I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the Fairy Queen?

It is here, just here, that *Non nobis* comes in. All occasions for thankfulness are an occasion for this grace, this bare statement, in so many words, that all our happinesses—all that are worth having—are made not by us, but in us: prepared outside us, and worked-up inside us. They are introduced into us, that they may come to life in us. Even my share of that City dinner, its meats and sweets and wines, was created outside me, and was put inside me, and came to life in my bodily life. But take Lamb's nobler instance. Shakespeare is a repast not bodily but spiritual; it was created, centuries ago, in the man Shakespeare; it is put into us, and it becomes part and parcel of our spiritual life. So with the beauty of the view from the verandah: all the chaotic elements of it were put into me, and I arranged them into one beautiful view: but I did not create them. I put them together, but they had to be got into me to begin with. So with the kindness of my friends:

it was created in them: and I happened to be about: and it was put into me, and lives in my life. *Non nobis, Domine.* For my food, my books, my view, my friends, to Thy Name be the praise.

And now—I am so sorry: you thought it was the end of the sermon—And now, without fear, weigh the answer to all this talk. There is food that is unwholesome; and there are people starving for want of food. There are books that are rubbish, or downright vile; and there are people who are not able to read. There are places and things that are altogether ugly; and there are people who never get away from them. There are friendships which fail and come to nothing; and there are people who have been ruined by bad friends. You are living in a Fool's Paradise: you have shut your eyes against all that is unsightly, and your mind against all that is horrible, and your heart against all who are suffering: you dare not look at the world as it is, the real world, full of evil. Do you never read the papers, do you never think of the War? It is charitable, to say that you are a fool: it would be nearer the truth to say that you are a hypocrite.

Call that an answer! It is no sort or kind of answer. It challenges faith; but it does not dispute facts, nor touch the reality of them. The great poets are what they are, and they sit on their thrones, untouched by the flood of rubbishy books. The beauty of the world is what it is, and sits on its

throne, untouched by the ugliness which disfigures the world. And the kindness of friends is what it is, and its throne is from everlasting to everlasting, though innumerable friendships break and come to nothing, or worse than nothing. All the trash that has ever been printed cannot interrupt the music of one line of Shakespeare: all the known ugliness of the world, all happening at once, could not take the colour out of a rose-petal: all the cruelties ever perpetrated, from the death of Abel to the ill-treatment of British prisoners in Germany, cannot undo one kindly act or thought. Some days ago, in the Tube, a young man, seeing me strap-hanging, and me old enough to be his father, gave me his seat. Not all the sins of the world make any difference to this plain fact, that he did. The Gods themselves cannot turn what has been into what has not been. The young man's courtesy *descendit de cælo*: it took upon itself the familiar conditions of time and space: it was put into him, and from him into me: it was and is as real as real can be: no words can say how real it is. Yesterday, on a long journey, I travelled with an ill-bred ass who made everybody uncomfortable. He also was real, painfully real. Only, thinking it over, I find myself able to believe that his bullying, somehow, was not so real as the young man's courtesy, not so really real. At the time, he was horrid: but in what we call eternity I believe that his behaviour is explained away by some process

which is no concern of mine: and I am sure that the young man's behaviour finds itself at home in eternity, and is not in need of any explanation.

We do feel, all of us, when we think steadily about it, that there must be some sort of limit to what is bad; some level of reality where it leaves off, some purpose which it does not prevent. In our common talk, our stock phrases, we admit this feeling. We explain away, as if we were in eternity—where, indeed, we are—the misconduct not only of ourselves but of others. *He didn't realise what he was doing*, we say: or again, *He's never been the same man since that accident*: or again, *One of his uncles is in a lunatic asylum*. We have similar phrases to express our belief that all ugliness is finite: for instance, we say of the Strand entrance to King's College, *Nothing could be uglier than that*. And what is more, we are ashamed of being unduly sensitive over a man's misconduct or a building's ugliness: we set ourselves not to mind it too much: we console ourselves with something more important. We plod through life refusing to be turned into atheists by any amount of Strand gateways, or even by other people's iniquities. And I say that these feelings are not only sane; they are as near the truth as we can get them.

It is not always easy. Now and again, we do have to shut our eyes, or half-shut them, but not for long: and when we open them again, the clouds are gone, as likely as not, and the sun out—oh, this old sermon.

But here is the end of it. For I am back at my text, *The World, Myself, and Thee.* What picture did the five words show to me, when my brain was still in the nursery? Why, the usual childish picture, of a lot of land with a lot of people on it, and me in the middle, and Somebody watching me. And what picture do they show to me now? It is not so clear as it ought to be: but that is the fault of the lantern, which is not powerful enough, and the screen, which is not large enough. Still, the picture is there: and if the lantern and the screen were all that they ought to be, I should see it more distinctly. What I do see—of course it is a moving picture—is the world being made for me while I am being made for the world. I see the world and me neither inventing each other, nor meeting each other by chance, but being introduced to each other: and I see the beauty of the world, and the goodness in the world, brought to me, concentrated on me, exercised in me. And that is worth seeing, even with a bad lantern and a very small screen.

It may be that you would rather have these facts in poetry than in prose. You will find what you want in Browning's "Epilogue": that short poem, at the end of his "Dramatis Personæ," in which he sees the whole thing as it really is.

II

THE BEAUTY OF WORDS

We love to draw a hard and fast line between words and deeds: and, in these days, the line seems to be even more clear than it was in the days which are gone. The War calls us to reverence deeds not words, and to admire not talkers but men on active service and women at work for their country. If you have, or had, one of your own people, father or brother, in the Navy or the Army, you are proud to contrast that life with the talk in Parliament, in the newspapers, in every club and every public-house. *Facta non verba* surely ought to be our motto: you have no doubt of that: you have no desire that our Imperial Æneid should begin with *Verba virumque.*

But we must not make too much of this difference between words and deeds. For we do something, if we do but open our lips. A man, over some unexpected pain or clumsiness, may let fly one word, and no more. That word is an act, or deed: it is something done: and so are all words. That is why forms

of words, for the transference of property, are called deeds: and when we sign these documents, we call it our act and deed. And what are Acts of Parliament but words agreed on by the two Houses, and signed by the Sovereign? Or take, in the life of any one of us, the words, spoken or written, which have gone to make us what we are: the lies that we have told, the vows that we have kept, the agreements that we have put our names to: all these words are deeds.

Thoughts, likewise, are deeds: for we do something, if we do but think. For example, you have often thought that So-and-so is a fool. Each of these thoughts was a deed: and, like all deeds done over and over again, they have got you into the habit of thinking him a fool: nor can you break yourself of it, unless you find that you have done him wrong in your thoughts of him.

Thought, word, and deed are all one: they are all of them that which is done, and cannot be undone. Take the case of a rich man making his will. All that he has thought, for years and years, of his sons and daughters: all that he has said or heard of them: all that he has been told of this or that hospital or charitable institution—all these thoughts and words have brought him, at last, to add the words of his name to a few pages of legal words. That is his will, his final purposes put in writing: it is only words, but these words are a deed which launches a

thousand deeds. The sons and daughters buy motors and other delights, the hospital opens a new out-patient department: the old man, by his death, does what his life did not: he fashions or repairs a whole multitude of lives with a page or two of words.

Thoughts are unspoken words, silent deeds: and words are spoken deeds. It is all one, whether you think or speak or act: whichever it is, you are doing something. Your thought is you, and your word is you, and your act is you. Even when we try to imagine God, we still acknowledge this unity of thought, word, and deed: we have Plato, and Saint John after him, teaching us that in the beginning was the Word.

My theme is the beauty of words. We prize and enjoy them as one of the inalienable comforts which attend our life. And, in the later years of life, they strengthen their hold on us. For we find ourselves beginning to stumble and fumble over "practical" affairs, and we set ourselves to be careful of words. Many of this world's pleasures run away when they see an old man coming; quite right that they should: but the pleasure of words draws closer to him, and puts a hand in his, and trots alongside of him, like one of his grandchildren. The older I am, the more intimately do words belong to me, and I to them: and very good they are to me. For my amusement, in the theatre of the brain—the phrase is Stevenson's—words are my company of players. They are as

generous as real actors: they give me their services for nothing, and are never too busy to grant me the kindness of a charity performance. Some of them tread the stage heavily, some dance and flirt, and some are mere figures of fun: there are words as complex as Hamlet, and there are words as careless of appearances as the clown in a pantomime: and they all play, play, in the little private theatre of my brain, whenever I ask them, and whatever I ask for: words majestical, fantastical, plain, or downright ugly; but all of them with something to say to me, none of them without well-marked character.

That some words are downright ugly is Nature's fault, not ours. Nature has made some ugly words, as she has made some ugly animals. Mostly, what is made by Nature is beautiful past all telling; but certain animals at the Zoological Gardens are ugly past all doubting: it is well for them that they do not know how unsightly they are. Even some flowers have a touch of ill-favour, given to them by dropsical petals or sickly colouring or lean hairy stems.

Of ugly words, we have examples in *uncle*, *strap*, *lobster*, *mud*, *scratch*, *mutton*, and *plum*. I made this list offhand: note, that the sound of *u* is in four of the seven words. The sound of the long *u*, in such words as *music* and *acute*, is pleasant enough: but the sound of the short *u*, in such words as *mutton* and *muffin*, does not charm the ear.

All explosive words, intended to imitate ugly

sounds, are low-caste words, of no account: such are *bang*, *pop*, *squish*, *fizz*, *hoot*, *sniff*.

Words not pronounced as they are spelt have a way of sounding amiss: the heard note of them jars, I know not how, on the visual image of them. We can best observe this in the case of certain old family names, so pronounced that they are the despair of foreigners.

The names of our "flesh-foods," mostly, are ugly. *Pork*, *veal*, *chop*, *steak*, *ham*, *sausage*, all are harsh words. But let not the vegetarians attribute importance to this fact: for *potato*, *turnip*, and *carrot* are none of them beautiful words.

Isolated words from other modern languages, suddenly introduced in conversation as it were with a pitchfork, never sound well. They do not belong to us; and they have no desire to belong to us: for they belong, nearly all of them, to France.

Of the beauty of words in foreign countries, let him speak who can speak from intimate acquaintance: I am quite sure that no country is richer than ours in this form of wealth. Among the many treasures of our language, the four words which I most admire are *tragedy*, *passion*, *silver*, and *virgin*. It is not only because they afford me noble imagery: nor it is only because the *a* and *i* sounds are so pleasant. Merely, they do seem to me words of singular beauty. So are *majesty*, *firmament*, *mystery*, and all words with the Moorish *al-* in them: *alchemy* is a very beautiful word.

Note, that five of these eight beautiful words are dactyls: that is to say, one long and two short syllables: *daktulos* is the Greek for a finger or a toe, one long and two short bones. Doubtless, it is the rhythm of the dactyl that helps to make these words beautiful: and *passion* likewise was born a dactyl, but we pronounce it *pashun*. Dactyls go with a swing: they animate great lines of poetry:

> This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty....
>
> And take upon us the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies....
>
> O, I'll leap up to my God. Who pulls me down?
> See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament....

There is no line in all poetry more memorable than this last, with its *firmament*, which thunders like a sledge-hammer. And, as a sledge-hammer can be adjusted either to smash a paving-stone or crack a nut, so this word sounds quite mild, when it comes not in Marlowe's Faustus but in Addison's hymn —"The spacious firmament on high."

The beauty of words is one of the beauties of Nature. If a man were to say to you that he did not admire roses and honeysuckle, diamonds and opals, butterflies and peacocks, you would know that you were in the presence of a fool. These beauties of Nature are beautiful in themselves: we admire them right away: we do not need to be told that they are

beautiful. The longer we go without them, the hungrier we are for them: that is why Spring is so beautiful after Winter, and Kensington Gardens after Notting Hill Gate, and a jeweller's shop after a butcher's shop. In a dull setting, one beautiful word catches the light like a diamond. Truly, such words are luxuries. If it were possible to tax them, we should be economical over *firmament* and *silver*, using instead of them *sky* and *argent*. And if it were possible to collect words, they would be of more use than dried flowers, or insects with pins through them: for the flowers and the insects are poor dead things, but a collection of words, living and imperishable, would gain not lose by keeping.

Think thus of words, that they are works of Nature, some beautiful, some strange, some vile: that is the way of Nature's handiwork. The beauty of some words, like the beauty of roses and opals and peacocks, is absolute and authoritative. The measure of beauty, in this or that word, may seem greater to you than to me, or to me than to you: but the feeling that they are beautiful is the same in each of us: and I think that the old lady was more right than wrong, who said that the Bible so comforted her with the blessed word *Mesopotamia*. For the beauty of words goes beyond meanings and uses: just as the beauty of roses and opals and peacocks goes beyond their purposes and market values.

But the pleasure which we receive from the

immediate sound of words is fugitive. Some people would call it a sensuous pleasure: but I advise you to be on your guard against that adjective. These people would have us to admire not the sound but the structure of words, their origin, their development. But here we must mind what we are doing, and where we are going: for we are trespassing on the estates of scholarship.

Scholars are men and women who apprehend the structure of words as men and women of science apprehend the structure of material objects. To the chemist, the contents of the salt-cellar are sodium chloride, atoms of a poisonous metal combined with atoms of a poisonous gas. To the botanist, a speck of flower-dust is an elaborate, thick-skinned, self-willed creature, highly specialised, parent of next year's flowers. To the anatomist, one persistent design is worked-out alike in the bat's wing, the seal's flapper, the dog's foot, and the monkey's paw. So, to the scholar, words disclose their structure, their place in Nature, and the secrets of their past. At the sound of the word *parallel*, he hears in the mind's ear the two Greek words for things which are side by side. No scholar, after that, could spell it *paralell*. At the sound of *psychical*, he hears the Greek word for the soul, that word which imitates the earliest of all sounds, God breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life. At the sound of *enthusiasm*, he hears the Greek word for divine possession, indwelling

deity. That is why scholars fight shy of this fine word, because it is a word of religion. They do not care to say that Mrs. So-and-so is enthusiastic over Chinese toy dogs: they think that if she were not so taken-up with toy dogs, there would be more room in her for indwelling deity.

Thus do words, in the scholar's mind, ring-up older words, and keep alive the languages which foolish people call dead. Neither Greek nor Latin is a dead language: we are all of us always talking Greek and Latin. Pupil, master, form, class, corporal punishment, term, examination, vacation, college, university, degree—all are Latin. Arithmetic, music, gymnasium, athletics, and all the -ologies and the -onomies, are Greek. In a thousand uses of daily life, Greek and Latin live. You need not be a scholar, to talk them. But, as you love English, do not be too fond of them in your talk: for they are good servants, but bad masters. Consider how many sentences in the newspapers have been spoiled by the use of *it transpired*, for *it came out*. No scholar employs this talk, redolent of Latin as it were of peppermint. There is a right way of using Latin and Greek, and there is a wrong way: you must neither run after them, nor run away from them. I know a man who, when he was a boy, set himself to write "pure English": he would have nothing to do with any words of Greek or Latin origin: he made all for himself, and worshipped all by himself, a sort of

clumsy Anglo-Saxon fetish, and expected us to admire its purity. It was like those idols from Easter Island which are placed outside the British Museum because they are too uncouth to come inside, and are not fit company for the gods and goddesses. That is what happens to us, if we run away from Greek and Latin. But we must not run after them: it is a common fault of young journalists, to be too fond of them.

The more scholarly you are, and the quicker you are to apprehend the structure of words, the more pleasure you will gain from them. You will not lose your delight in their immediate beauty: you keep that, and you add to it your knowledge of their structure: just as the botanist keeps his delight in the immediate beauty of flowers, and adds to it his knowledge of their structure.

None but scholars can fully enjoy language. They may not care to talk Greek and Latin: but they have learned them. To be wholly ignorant of these two languages is to be deprived of the relish of our own language. Say that you have a bad cold in your head: you are still able to digest and absorb your food, but you do not taste it: you get the benefit of it, but you get no pleasure from it. The unclassical man does not fully enjoy his language: he does not taste its delicate fragrances and flavours: the classical words supply his needs, but withhold from him their subtle qualities: he uses them heedlessly, as undergraduates, on the towing-path at a boat-race, pro-

claim, at the top of their voices, the sacred name of this or that college. Reckon as enemies of your native language the men who despise or pretend to despise Greek and Latin. But your language has other enemies. Consider what injury has been done to it by men and women of medical science: the words that they have coined, no, not coined but forged: half-Greek, half-Latin, such as *appendicectomy* and *vaccine-therapy* and *auto-suggestion*; or altogether meaningless, such as *endothelium* and *megaloblasts*; or feeble and clumsy, such as *epidemiology* and *specificity*; or dragged naked out of their warm beds in the dictionaries, such as *trauma* and *sequelæ*. The doctor's life is so full of good works that you must forgive him these bad words: none the less it is a pity, that he should be so unkind to our language who is so kind to our lives. But the worst of all enemies are those would-be wreckers, the advocates of "phonetic spelling." We only waste our time, trying to guess what has made them so perverse: for they have no sort of reason or excuse for the evil which they would do if they could. The men who dream of a common language for many nations, to which they give the name of Esperanto—a lingo of their own, which is to language what shorthand is to writing—these few men, though they are on a vain quest, are harmless: but the men who seek to bring about phonetic spelling are worse than enemies of our language, for they are traitors. They

would sell their birthright, and ours, for a mess of the very nastiest pottage that ever was stirred.

I pray you, as you are careful over the weightier matters of your conduct, be careful also over your words. Do not think it priggish, to honour them. And it is so easy to talk good English; so easy to avoid theatrical and self-conscious tricks. Pay constant regard to short words. Half the fun of talking, and of writing too, is in the skilful use of short words. It is good practice, to try how far you can write with nothing but words of one syllable: I once put sixty-eight of them together, and the effect of this quiet little procession was all that I could desire. Tennyson's lyrics, and his *In Memoriam*, are good models for this purpose: and so is the English version of the Psalms.

Be fond, but not slavishly fond, of abbreviated words. Give them time to breathe: do not hustle them: say, sometimes, *will not* and *did not*, as a change from the incessant *won't* and *didn't*.

There is room, of course, if not in pure English, yet in good English, for slang. Some people despise all slang: they would keep all talk scrupulously tidy. But our words are works of Nature; and Nature will not let us keep her tidy. Slang is the weeds of language: but weeds are beautiful: besides, they make beautiful contrasts: such as we admire when the croquet-lawn is silvered with daisies, and when poppies add their scarlet, and corn-flowers their blue,

to a field of wheat. Nobody wants to hear you talk with the preciseness of a Dutch garden: it is far better to talk like a Devonshire lane: best of all, to avoid extremes, and be neither too stiff in your talk, nor too offhand. Superfine English is the orchids and hothouse rarities of our language: good English is its open-air roses, lilies, and carnations: slang is its bindweed and ragged robin, thyme and meadowsweet. Think what a wealth of slang is in Shakespeare. The young men in Romeo and Juliet are quick with it: even Hamlet does not despise it: Falstaff and his satellites are drawn together by it: King Henry V. is less delightful than Prince Hal, because he has left it off. Even the women of Shakespeare are not above it—Portia, Beatrice, Rosalind: nor does any tragedy refuse it a place of interlude and relief. Shakespeare without slang would still be poetry, but would not be Shakespeare.

But I tired long ago of my own slang, and am too old to learn yours, or to judge between them. I prefer my *swagger* to your *swank*, and your *bounder* to my *cad*. I think that you have no word equivalent to my *swell*: for my *swell* was a gentleman, and your *nut* is not. I congratulate you on your apt use of *some* and *the limit*, and on your disuse of *hectic* and *chronic*. But slang-words, after all, are fragile stuff: the most that they can expect is a short life and a merry one, and they are born to die.

Note here a difference between slang and swearing. The form of slang, the wording of slang, is never the same for two generations together: but the existence of slang, the influences of slang, are constant and persistent from age to age. The children in the Bible-story, who said to Elisha *Go up, thou baldhead*, were talking slang: indeed, Adam talked slang, when he invented names for the animals: there was nothing else for him to talk. Slang is incessantly changing its form, but never going out: swearing is slow to change its form, but is tending to go out. It is horrible to hear girls or women swearing. He who swears at a collar-stud may be above swearing at a dog, let alone another man: and he who swears at a woman or a child is *the limit.* It is certain that swearing may add force to a sentence: but there are other ways of producing this effect. The talk of men who habitually swear merely fails to produce any effect: it defeats its own purpose. Swearing, to be tolerable, must be as unpremeditated as any other convulsive seizure: the word ought to be jerked out of the man's mouth at the shock of sudden pain or annoyance inflicted through some senseless thing. He who swears at whole nations, or at far-flung national sins, is wasting his breath: so is he who swears at the Government: he has no sense of his own smallness. The right-sized objects are broken collar-studs, upset ink-pots, or a train just missed: inanimate things, which we swear not at but over.

But all swearing is a display of nerves, and evidence of a poor supply of adjectives.

Neither slang, nor swearing, is the chief hindrance to the talking of good English. We lower the standard of talk, not so much by these, but more by the twin faults of slovenliness and volubility. There are people who seem to be unable to stop talking: you may find yourself imprisoned, in train or tram-car, with a couple of them. The flow of words is bewildering: you would think that the two brains had no inhibitory centres, no control over the machinery of speech: that the whole performance was almost involuntary. If the duet flags for one moment, both performers become restless, hunting in their minds for something to say. The talk is without accentuation, without perception of values: no light and shade, no turning of sentences, no care for the right word. It is slovenly perforce, because it is voluble: it has no time to smarten itself in the looking-glass of thought: it is in a hurry all the way from Shepherd's Bush to Selfridge's.

Be above this idle neglect of the beauty and strength of words. You are attentive to the colour and the set of your clothes: give no less attention to the colour and the set of your sentences. Slovenly words, in you who are well-educated, are as bad as dropped *h*'s: and slipshod phrases are as bad as dirty finger-nails. Honour your talk, not fool it away: give it a touch of distinction: that is to say, quiet

rightness and habitual restraint, born into it from within, not imposed on it from without. It came into my head, as I was writing this essay, that our Lord always paid high honour to words, and was sorely vexed by the sound of third-rate talk. He could not bear to hear the disciples swearing, or disputing, or talking for the sake of talking. Again and again He told them to mind what they were saying; He advised them to make plain Yea and Nay go as far as they could; He steadily refused to draw any line between thought, word, and deed; He hated the waste or misuse of words.

Look up all that He said about words, and write an essay on your gathered handful of texts, in return for this discourse which I have made to you. While you are young, you may think that it does not matter, if words are wasted: they are not like bread or coals: there will always be plenty to go on with. Old folk, nearer to the day when the rest is silence, think otherwise: and it is youth, more than age, which is garrulous. Old folk, unless their brains are beginning to fail, mostly are careful of words. They carry about with them scraps of poetry, which serve them over and over again when they lie awake at night. They bring the same story from some recess of memory, time after time, as they bring the same pair of spectacles out of its leather case. They invent neat little sayings, which they touch up and polish, and leave unspoken. "Where words are scarce, they

are seldom spent in vain." You can see them turning over their stock of words, picking and choosing just what they require, and with deliberation trimming and poising a sentence before they venture to offer it to one of the grandchildren.

Note.—I have just had the enjoyment of reading Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's Lectures on the Art of Writing: and I pray you to read what he says, in Lecture VII., of the beauty of vowel-sounds—"the first, or almost the first, secret of beautiful writing in English, whether in prose or in verse; I mean that inter-play of vowel-sounds in which no language can match us.... I think if you will but open your ears to this beautiful vowel-play which runs through all the best of our prose and poetry, whether you ever learn to master it or not, you will have acquired a new delight, and one various enough to last you though you live to a very old age." Stevenson, likewise, speaking of the beauty of consonant-sounds, says that skilful writers love to make as it were patterns with them, weaving two or three chosen consonant-sounds in and out through the music of a sentence. Certainly, we ought to admire the beauty not only of words, but of vowels and consonants. Sir Arthur does well to advise us, over one of Mr. Yeats's lyrics, to "mark how the vowels play and ring and chime and toll." And, of course, good writers are conscious of this "secret of beautiful writing." But I think that Stevenson goes too far with his theory that they deliberately weave musical patterns. For you can find such patterns wherever you look for them. For instance—*Pears's soap is matchless for the complexion*—here you have a charming consonant-pattern in *p*'s and *m*'s and *s*'s. Or again, *Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette. Wednesday, September* 27. Mark how the *a*'s and *e*'s play and ring and chime and toll. There is no secret, really. The beauty of the sounds of vowels and consonants is one of the beauties of Nature, the same for all of us: not a trick to be mastered, but a pleasure to be enjoyed.

III

HANDWRITINGS

It is always a matter of surprise to small children, that we are able to write so fast. The pen fascinates them, as it scuds down each line: they wonder alike at our dexterity and at the profusion of what we have to say. *Shall you have done soon? How do you know what you are going to say next?* They resent our silence, they are tired of waiting for us to talk to them. *I'm telling him what a good girl you were this morning.* Silence again, for a moment. *What are you telling him now?* They call to mind, as they watch us, their wrestling with pen and ink, when they have to write Thank you for the pretty calendar I like it very much. All our lesser gifts to children ought to bear the inscription, Not to be acknowledged. What business have we, with a six-penny calendar, to condemn the child to fifteen minutes' hard labour?

As the children are surprised at the speed of our writing, so am I, far more than they. Each letter

shaped, each word spelt, each line straight: the attendant stops and dashes where they ought to be: and we, all the time, like Mother Carey, not making these things, but sitting still and making them make themselves. For the whole performance is automatic. Bless my soul, what a name for it. This delicate and swift adjustment of touch and sight, this intricate embroidery of the work of the pen, woven with black on white, is only mechanical: we are thinking of what we are saying, not of what we are doing. Thus to explain the act of handwriting exalts, not lessens, my great regard for its excellence. Our handwritings, being automatic, are so much the more express and admirable: though the movement of our hands is immeasurably coarser than the movement of the wings of a midge. Writing is one of those good equable bodily actions which are neither so conscious that they are upset by every whim of the brain, nor so unconscious that they are wholly pleasureless, like the beat of the heart.

The pity is, that your pride in writing well is defeated by your desire to write quickly. In times less hurried than yours, all writing was slow: and small children, less hurried than you, shape each letter slowly, even following the pen with the tip of the tongue. You, for whom greater affairs are waiting, must be quick: you take no pride in the tracery of letters, the neat joining of syllables, the exact proportion between the capital and the shaft of a word.

Thus you lose pleasure, when you write to a friend; and he, when he reads what you have written.

Looking back over more than fifty years, I am remembering the discipline of the copy-book. At the top of the page was one long word, written with fastidious elegance, in the Italian style, each letter a masterpiece: it was like the engraving on a card of invitation, writ large: there is no such writing nowadays, except for illuminated addresses. If the chosen word were shorter than the line, its initial letter was put after it, or before and after it, thus—though the effect cannot be reproduced in print—*A. Authority. A.* Or again, *Benevolence. B.* Down the page, from line to line, my pen crept, ploughing its lonely furrow. With each line, the copy was less like the original. The long-tailed letters trembled and swayed; the *a*'s and o's were distorted; the distinction between thin up-strokes and thick down-strokes could not be maintained. This alone might be hoped for, that Authority would continue to be so spelt, and Benevolence would leave the page without a blot on its character. The worst of the o's were punished by the insertion of human features into their vacant faces: and I started next morning with *Confidence. C.*

Thus, by effort over each letter, we are taught to write: but the distinctive style of a handwriting is the result of later influences. The chief of them, for many of us, is deliberate imitation of some older

person's hand, or deliberate invention of a hand of our own. A great surgeon has told me that handwritings may be inherited: but I am sure that many of us do not inherit, but imitate or invent. It is probable also that the frequent writing of Greek may influence a boy to separate his letters when he is writing his own language. But I pray you not to think that a liberal education ensures a good handwriting. And be thankful, and you cannot be too thankful, that the advance of national education has increased past all reckoning the number of hands which are easy and pleasant to read. The old phrases, *an educated hand*, *a refined hand*, *the hand of a gentleman*, *the hand of a lady*, are falling into disuse: and we have heard the last of that silly phrase, *an Oxford hand*. Be thankful, also, that our national schools have abandoned the craze for teaching the children to slope their writing the wrong way: and above all be thankful, that so few of us in these days have to mark the cross instead of signing the name.

Consider now certain habits or tricks of handwriting: and let us begin at the beginning, at the margin.

They who fail to keep a straight margin to the written page may be nothing worse than careless or tired. The margin may be jagged with lines of different lengths: or it may gradually widen, or gradually narrow, as the page is filled. Of course,

this behaviour of the margin sets us thinking of the inequality between the right hand and the left hand: and we argue that a right-handed man would drive his margin to the left, but a left-handed man, with the pen in his right hand, would let his margin drift to the right. But the same man will slope his margin at one time to the right, at another time to the left: which sets us thinking of the inequality between the two sides of the brain. But I doubt whether left-handed people are merely left-handed: I believe that they are left-sided; that their measurement is larger, and their bodily growth more active, all down the left side.

A crooked margin may signify nothing, or next to nothing: but the tilting up or down of the ends of the last few lines of a page is a more serious matter. For it sometimes goes with real failure of brain-power. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. None the less, it may be a danger-signal.

The underlining of words is a habit which grows apace in us, till we underline not once but twice: I have even seen a word astride of three lines: it had the air of an orator on a Hyde Park platform. Underlining is old-fashioned now. Queen Victoria made frequent use of it; and it does ease the business of letter-writing. If it be excessive, it tends to become ineffective: with moderate use, it gives a pleasant effect of simplicity. You had better underline a word and have done with it, than elaborate

your sentences or be absurdly self-conscious over your words.

Of that other old fashion of writing, the lavish use of capitals, there is much to be said. He who would understand capitals ought to study a large collection of family-letters written during the first half of the nineteenth century: he ought to watch the slow disappearance of capitals out of one and the same bundle of letters. How fond the young man was of them, how free with them. He assures the Object of his Affections that nothing in his Conduct shall ever give her a Moment of Regret: he lays his Heart at her Feet, hoping for Encouragement. How the fine capitals adorn his love-letters to her. But they fade: he loves her still, but in small script only. Now and again, when he is in the mood for it, they begin to venture back. If he be long parted from her, suspense becomes Suspense: and the moon, when he remembers that it is shining alike on her and on him, becomes the Moon. You may even detect his capitals in the very act of vanishing; shadows of what they were, shrunken, crippled, not animating but haunting the pages of his letters.

The life and death of capitals is one of those mortal things which touch the mind. When did they come in, and why did they go out? They have not received from literary men that attention which they deserve: the natural history of capitals needs to be studied as the origin of species was studied by

Darwin. We have neglected them, and by our neglect they have become scarce. They were so responsive to the fancy of the moment: there was meaning in the eighth of an inch: they could put on paper the light and shade of words. Take, for an example, the word *love*. We ought to write it, according to the use which we are making of it, now with a small letter, now with a timid sort of tweeny or small-sized capital, now with a full-sized, now with a super-capital: but we are tied down, alike in script and in type, to choose between a small letter and a capital of stock size. Or take the word *king*. Are we bound to give to Ferdinand of Bulgaria that capital which is all that we can give to our King? Or take the most bewildering of all examples. Ought we to write of the deities of the ancient world as gods or as Gods? Do not say that there is no rule; that it does not matter. Of course there is no rule: that is why it matters. We may start by refusing the capital to all mere idols or fetishes. Mumbo-jumbo, even to them who believe in him, is only a god: indeed, he is nothing more than a native African word; he ought to be printed in italics, plain *mumbo-jumbo*. Likewise where Caliban says of Stephano

> What a thrice-double ass
> Was I, to take this drunkard for a god—

here is no occasion for a capital. But Zeus, Apollo, Athene—surely we might well give to them the

honour which we do not care to give to mumbo-jumbo. But the difficulty is Bacchus. The Romans called him Bacchus whom the Greeks called Dionysos: and it is a great come-down from Dionysos to Bacchus. Again, the Romans called her Minerva whom the Greeks called Athene: and it is a great come-down from Athene to Minerva. Besides, in Imperial Rome, neither Bacchus nor Minerva was taken seriously by clever people; they were a fairy-story, a bit of folk-lore. Shall we put it thus, that the Greeks in Homer's time believed in Gods and Goddesses, but the Romans in Juvenal's time had left off believing in gods and goddesses? Can we thus distribute G's, as if they were awards of merit? There is no end of such difficulties, no way out of them. Only, note this living force of capital letters; how they twist in and out of sentiments, like roses up trellis-work.

Punctuation, and the use of the dash, follow no strict rule. It has been said that we ought, when we are reading aloud, to count silently one for a comma, two for a semi-colon, three for a colon, and four for a full-stop. This habit might be adopted by writers who are careless of punctuation and prodigal of dashes. Very scrupulous writers despise and avoid all dashes; but few of us take that much trouble: nor is it easy to see what is wrong with them. And they are a welcome relief: we have such a poor collection of stops, just the quartet, to

accompany all that we are saying. But if we had more, we should pay less regard to those which we have. It is our poverty that makes us ingenious with them.

Notes of exclamation hardly deserve to be called stops: they are a trick of writing which grows on us by indulgence: the writers of serio-comic letters begin with one, and end with a row of them like the kisses in a child's letter.

Our forms of subscribing our letters, *Yours truly* and the like, are purposely curt and matter-of-fact. We advance from *faithfully* to *truly*, and from *truly* to *sincerely*: we hesitate between *I am*, *I remain*, and *Believe me*: we arrive, on the way of friendship, at *ever* and *very*. In letters to friends who have children, it is well to say that we are *your's and yours'*. There was a time when letters were not subscribed but superscribed. *If you are well, we also are well*—that is how Cicero headed his letters to Atticus: it is like our *Hoping this finds you as it leaves me*. Or they were both superscribed and subscribed, as are the Epistles of St. Paul. From his long messages of love and encouragement we have slowly come to *Yours truly*: the great ways of subscribing have been lost, and will never be recovered. Some of us even keep a store of printed postcards, *From Mr. So-and-so*.

In the hazardous passage from script into type, some of the faults of writing are corrected, and some

of its habits are reproduced. The crooked margins are straightened, the underlined words are put in italics, the capitals and the dashes are faithfully rendered. Cold print, the mailed fist brought down on the irresolute hand, imposes a Prussian despotism over all scripts alike ; though some were pleasant to read, and others injured the eyesight of the compositors. But there are individualities of handwriting which refuse to submit themselves to this uniform efficiency. The size of a handwriting, and the style of a signature, are beyond the reach of the iron rule of the press.

The size of handwritings ranges from a loose far-flung scrawl to a hand so small and elfish that it almost needs a magnifying-glass. Women tend to write larger than men : but mere largeness of writing affords no evidence of largeness of heart and of mind, nor of strength of will. These gifts are more likely to belong to the owner of the very small hand : but it must be not only small but exact, sharply clear, as if the strokes of the pen were incised on the paper. I have in mind three writers of this microscopic hand : two of them physicians and men of science, and one a famous theologian. But we must not judge by size alone : for the large impetuous hand may belong to a very generous temperament. Besides, all of us write larger at one time than at another. Mostly, we write small when we are cold : and we write large when we are tired or ill.

The act of signature has no importance, unless the occasion, or the writer, be of great importance. The writing of our names is no more "characteristic" than the rest of our writing: and we must not attempt to make it "bold" or "striking." The rules of signature are plain. We must not write our own names fine, and our friends' names slovenly: and the polite letter-writer will give to the addressing of his envelopes as much care as he gives to the signing of his name. We must write our names legibly: and, if we are *Mrs.* or *Miss* or *Rev.*, it is kind of us to say so, in brackets, when we write to strangers. Good signature needs no sort of scroll, flourish, or loop. All elaborate signature is unwise: for we have only one name for all purposes. If it were your constant business to sign treaties, Acts of Parliament, State papers, and cheques, you might need a signature as magnifical as Queen Elizabeth's. But you would have to use it on every postcard. Signature must be proportionate to self.

Be sure of this much, that we cannot judge a man by his handwriting. Pay no heed to people who say that they can: for they are deceiving themselves. What they call a strong, bold handwriting, for example, is just as likely to come of mere conceit or impudence as of strength and courage. I am not thinking of genuine Scotland-Yard experts in handwriting: they and their microscopes are able to discover forgeries, and to find evidence in handwritings,

with amazing accuracy: they know their work. I am thinking of the amateur "delineators of character," the foolish people who set out to estimate the soul by the script. Our handwritings refuse to be thus docketed and pigeon-holed, as if they were our finger-prints: the interest of them does not reveal itself to the methods of Sherlock Holmes. It has its own way of revealing itself: I saw something of it, years ago. I was reading and arranging the collected letters of two men whom I had known well; the letters of two life-times, from boyhood to death. The like opportunity, sooner or later, will come to you: and, if you loved and honoured your dead—and you hardly ought to read all their letters, if you did not—but if you did, you will learn, as you read, the meaning of handwritings.

An outsider, looking at half-a-dozen letters, would have said that the two hands were curiously unlike; that the one was methodical and precise, the other fantastical and self-conscious. Here he would have stopped. He would not have gone far wrong: but he would not have gone far. For the two men were father and son: their lives had been united, in and in, for sixty years. Take first the hand of the older man. In boyhood, it was large, free, and loosely knit: a good hand, but immature: it was fashioned, I think, in imitation of *his* father's hand. Through many years of incessant work, of decent poverty, of difficulties and anxieties, he set himself to be a man

of authority in the science and art of surgery, which is one of the most exacting of all professions. By these years, his handwriting was determined: and it bore the mark of them. It became small, clear-cut, hard, faultless: it had the effect of chains of little crystals. He wrote slowly: he seemed to be engraving, not writing: he gave to each word its proper space and effect. Self-control, strong will, intensity of purpose, made it a hand of the utmost distinction: in the good Latin sense, it was a *nervous* hand. When he came to signing a letter, his pen, for a moment, was poised: then, like a hawk swooping, it descended in a long initial, perfect, exquisite, which no man could imitate. In old age, he carefully treasured his dexterity: he wrote even more slowly, shaping his words almost as if he were performing a delicate operation. So long as he could resist his infirmities, he would neither accept nor acknowledge defeat. In the end, of course, old age won: it always does: but what of that? Its winnings were only his leavings. He fought old age to a finish: and the letters of these last years of his life bear witness that he died but never surrendered.

His son's handwriting is of no less interest, to anybody who knew him well. In early boyhood, it was altogether vague and unformed: it might be going to be anything. At his public school, he was taught to honour and enjoy Greek: and, with that gift added to his life, he took to writing in a sort of

Greek style ; the letters curiously separate, angular, stiff, archaistic, and as it were stuck straight on end : a hand so Greek that the words looked as if they ought to have accents over them. At his University, he was fastidious and punctilious over the lesser affairs of his life : and it may be that a certain elaborateness came for these years into his handwriting ; but I am not sure. Only, I know that he, like his father, loved self-restraint and self-control : I can see this in his hand : but it is more variable in size than his father's. Of course, with a hand so Greek, the long-tailed letters were bound to suffer : they could not, like the sheep of Little Bo-Beep, leave their tails behind them : and a strange fate overcame his *g*'s and *y*'s. In boyhood and early manhood, they were straight. Then a very slight kink began to occur among them. It became, very slowly, more pronounced. By the time that he was forty, the tails were convulsed with a swishing zig-zag, as if they had received an electric shock : I have never seen such tails in any other writing, unless it were by way of imitation. It is probable that the strain of his work had something to do with this peculiarity of his hand. It is certain that the zig-zag did not become worse, but rather became less, in the last few years of a life noted for its purity and its beauty.

That is how we ought to study handwritings, from the beginning to the end of the writer's life. And that is why the mere collecting of autographs may

be hardly better than a waste of time and of money. Come now—to finish with—tell me, What is the good of autographs? I am without bias in this matter: it is only twice that I have been asked for my autograph: once by the care-taker of a hall in which I was lecturing; once by two little boys at a preparatory school where I was lecturing. The care-taker explained to me that he "made a point of it," whoever might be lecturing: the little boys wrecked the pride of my autograph by veering round to the headmaster and asking him for his: as if the pen were the only means of acquaintance with a school-master's hand.

Autographs are harder to collect than stamps; and a commonplace collection is hardly worth the trouble of making. The proper enjoyment of them is not to be had till the writers of them are dead. What is the good of the mere signatures of the living, their scribbled envelopes, their thanks for kind enquiries, their regrets that they cannot attend the meeting, and all such drift of ordinary correspondence? But when they are dead, then the value of these things begins to assert itself: not because there will be no more of them, but because they have become relics. Look at the great autograph-room in the British Museum: it is full of sacred relics: the manuscripts of immortal books, the love-letters of immortal poets, the papers signed by immortal makers of our Empire. Here is Shakespeare's autograph: you hardly care how he

wrote, or how he spelt his name: you care only to see something that he really made with his own hand; you covet the actual bit of vellum where his fingers were placed for a minute. Imagine—it is utterly absurd—but imagine that I am permitted to recover, by a miracle, one autograph, out of all the millions of millions of autographs which have gone to dust. I may choose which it shall be: I may only choose one. It goes without saying, that I would recover Pilate's: I would find, in some hiding-place in Egypt, the title which he wrote for the Cross. We should all of us choose that. Board, or strip of parchment, whichever it was, we should say, This for me, out of all the world's lost handwritings, this one relic.

If an autograph be not a relic, it is nothing more than a rarity. Take one example. I am thinking—who of us is not, in this June, 1916?—of Lord Kitchener. A week ago, his autograph was prized as a rarity: now, it is a relic. A week ago, the autograph-hunter, displaying it pasted into his album, would have been lightly congratulated on his good luck: now, Death has so exalted the casual signature that it will be had in reverence from generation to generation, this relic, this bit of paper which has Lord Kitchener's writing on it.

Of those sayings of his which have found their way into print in the last few days, one was to somebody who asked him for his autograph. *Young man, you had better do something to make your own autograph*

worth having. It is not so hard as it sounds, to make the sight of our handwriting worth having. May the sight of yours be always welcome to many good friends; the style of it determined for you by many good influences: and some of your letters treasured as well-beloved relics.

Here, on the revised proof, comes a blank half-page. Like Nature, I abhor a vacuum: let me fill it with a bit of advice. Do not be content to write a bad hand. People go by appearances: it may be foolish of them, but we cannot stop them. And there is no denying that some hands look vague or mean, and others look sensitive and resolute. A good hand may help you to gain marks at an examination, or to obtain a coveted appointment. Besides, handwriting is an accomplishment, like dancing. An illegible letter, to a busy man, is like a clumsy partner to a skilful dancer. We can avoid having to dance, we cannot avoid having to write: and, if your handwriting is still unsettled, still in the making, you ought to be careful to make it pleasant to look at and easy to read.

IV

THE WAY OF SCIENCE

THERE is an empty phrase, *The wonders of Science.* Everything is wonderful of itself: Science has nothing to do with it. Take, for example, the striking of a match, the whirl and clash of millions of millions of atoms rushing together, which are the flame. Nothing, not the whole earth and all the stars, could be more wonderful: but the wonder of a box of matches does not depend on the science of a box of matches. Another empty phrase is, *The wonders of the microscope.* You might as well speak of the wonders of the stethoscope, or of the periscope. Science has nothing to do with the everlasting wonderfulness of everything everywhere. In the lane here, last night, I saw a glow-worm. The lighting-up of the glow-worm's house of life, the lamp set by this diminutive Hero to guide her Leander to her, the innate chemistry whereby she produces and expends, in a Devonshire lane, her private store of Balmain's luminous paint—these are wonders not of

Science, but of the glow-worm. Let us not talk of the wonders of Science: let me talk of the way of Science. And let me begin, not with men and women of science, but with myself. Time enough to look up to them, when I have done with looking into me.

Deep down in memory, I find two portraits, old and faded now, but the very image of me when they were taken. One is a picture of a little boy standing, with half-a-dozen of his age and size, at a high mahogany desk, which has a cane in it. Behind the desk sits a most unhappy schoolmaster, sick of the sight of us: I am on his left hand: we are beginning to learn Euclid. It was the first book; and it was either the first or the second proposition, I forget which: but I am quite sure—though it is fifty years back—that I was feeling the strength of Euclid, and was vaguely conscious of his authority. Other lessons could, and did, go wrong as it were of themselves. Words could be wrongly spelt, pronounced, or translated: sums could refuse to come right, even when my tongue was aching with the exertion of licking my slate: grammar could go wrong in fifty directions, and was largely a matter of choice. But Euclid was Euclid. No compromise was possible with him, no doubt, no evasion: he left nothing to private judgment, nothing to chance. "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be." That is what he was saying. And

that is the first and last word of Science. The little boy never became familiar with Euclid, and long ago forgot all his lines and angles: but Euclid did once call his attention to the fact that Science was saying something.

The other picture is of him quite grown-up, when Science next found him and spoke to him. This time, she said that she was not in a hurry; and she gave him a good talking-to. He had been filling his head with Greek and Latin and other book-learning: and a great deal of it was treasure imperishable and beautiful: but of course he had not understood all that he read. Then he became a medical student: and I cannot tell you what a change it was for him. He and his young friends had been giving the title of "stinks" to the whole celestial system of the natural sciences: with the one exception of astronomy. The existence of that science was not open to doubt: there was a Professor of it: he lived in a house with a telescope on the top: therefore, astronomy did exist. We could not call it stinks: we made an exception in favour of it: but all the rest of the natural sciences were stinks: and the New Museum, the work of Ruskin and Acland and Rolleston, was the Stinks Museum. Fancy what it must have been, for this young man, to hear the voice of Science. It spoke to him in the quiet and receptive span of time which comes after the taking of a degree. At the sound of that voice, the old

order gave place to new. The Gods and Goddesses of the Ancient World, pale and angry, would not stop to be insulted: they went back to Olympus, and the poets and the philosophers went with them. The Nine Muses—all but Urania, who stayed with the Professor of Astronomy—put their pretty hands over their ears, and ran away as fast as they could; and the young man hardly missed them. The colour faded out of pictures, the pleasure out of books; and the values of general ideas wavered and shifted like mists over the hills when the sun gets at them. Have another metaphor. The lines on which his mind had been travelling, first class, in the compartment reserved for him and his young friends, took such a sharp curve that he was almost thrown out of his seat. Have another. He had soaked himself in great thoughts, like a small sponge in a large bath: now, at the touch of the voice of Science, the bath was emptied, and all his imbibed learning evaporated, and he lay shrunken and athirst for something else.

It was chemistry that especially pleased him. He was altogether unscientific: indeed, when he came to study oxalic acid, he began by tasting it, to the dismay of his instructor. What he loved, in chemistry, was the sense that he was up against positive, incisive, measurable facts. As Euclid had spoken to him, so chemistry spoke to him—"Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be." He was doing practical chemistry: he was making

gases, fusing metals in borax beads, dissolving things soluble, precipitating things precipitable. Oh, the joy of it; the relief of making things after trying to make out thoughts.

His friends said that he had "taken up Science": they ought to have said that Science had taken up him, had set him to peep over the edge of his imagination at things as they are. He was given the run of all the matter that there is: he played with bits of the universe. Each time that he made a gas or a precipitate, he was repeating the work of Creation: not pretending, but doing it: he made things as they really are made: and, except that he was working on a small scale, there was no difference between him and the first chapter of the Book of Genesis.

It follows, that he had the universe backing him in all that he did. The forces which in the beginning had been the making of the world came when he called them: he Prospero, they Ariel. The whole universe was bound in honour to ensure the success of his performances with a test-tube. Indeed, the very existence of the universe was involved in them. If his test-tube gave the wrong answer—as it often did—it proved that he had put the wrong question. If the test-tube should ever give the wrong answer to the right question, it would be the end of everything: for he would be right and the universe would be wrong: and all the laws of Nature would immediately fold their tents like the Arabs and silently steal

away. It is a grand sensation, after reading thoughts, to be reading things. Book-learning takes so many views: things take one, and no more.

The antagonism between books and things was well brought home to him by one of his teachers at this time, who pulled a book away from him and threw it across the table, bidding him sharply not to read, but to look at things with his own eyes. That is what Science is. It is the kingdom of things. And they most keenly enjoy the kingdom of things who suddenly, when they are grown up, find their way into it from the kingdom of thoughts, and receive with gladness its authority.

Not all of them remain there long enough to make themselves true men or women of science. With some of them, the novelty wears off: they go back to the kingdom of thoughts: they were hardly more than trippers in the kingdom of things. They were like children during the first rush of a holiday at the seaside, enjoying the change, the escape from streets and shops and a square to the joyful freedom of the beach, where they can dig and paddle all day, and catch, in their little pails, real shrimps. But even these casual tourists in the kingdom of things, these non-residents, gain happiness from it, while they are there; happiness not of the intellect only, but of the heart. That is the way of Science: it is not light without heat, it is both light and heat.

This twofold power of Science, to enlighten and

to warm us, is different from the practical application of this or that science to our daily affairs. We have got into the habit of expecting men of science to invent material advantages for us: new processes, new apparatus, new drugs, new devices of all sorts to save time and trouble and money. So they do: they are incessantly inventing and devising. But Science would still be Science, even if she sat everlastingly with her hands folded in front of her, and never invented so much as a safety-pin. For example, the love of mathematics is pure science. Mathematics are applied to a thousand practical purposes: but that is not why the mathematician loves them. He finds, in the working out of his problems, excitement such as he might otherwise find in a race or a novel. Archimedes, during the siege of Syracuse, whom the Romans found still pencilling diagrams in the dust of the pavement, and killed him then and there—Archimedes was in love with pure science: as true a lover as Galileo or Newton. And there is, or was, in Cambridge, a society of learned men, who at their festival dinners had this toast—*Pure Mathematics. Thank God, they were never of any use to anybody.* Science is on her throne high above all our talk of scientific inventions, all our talk of the value of a scientific training for boys and girls.

To the end of your days, believe in pure science. What is the good of pure science? It stands you in the presence of abstract thought. What is the

good of standing in the presence of abstract thought? Your question reveals your need of standing there. Science is not bound to be of any practical value to us. She never promised to make inventions, improvements, and facilities; nor to enrich men of business; nor to provide plans for the training of boys and girls. She condescends to us, she flings her gifts right and left among us: and the whole world is one continuous record of what she has done and is doing for us in the kingdom of things.

What is the constitution, and the fabric, of the kingdom of things? It is founded and built on number and proportion. Things had to come into existence: and that is the only way in which they could come. Without number and proportion, nothing could ever begin to begin. Nothing could be either here or there; nothing could be either past, present, or future; nothing could be of any shape, size, weight, quality, or quantity. Things cannot get to us till they are related to each other, and related to us. Number and proportion are conditions, under which they are related to each other, and to us. Apart from number and proportion, things have no existence for us. These conditions of their existence are eternal: that is to say, they are the very making of everything, and without them is not anything made that is made.

Of course, things cannot relate themselves. How could they? It is we, who relate them to each other;

this one here, that one there ; this one then, that one now. They cannot relate themselves. Relation is a form of thought: and they cannot think. If they could think, they would not be things. We have no acquaintance with "things in themselves," as the philosophers write of them: and I doubt whether the philosophers are much better acquainted with them than we are. But things as we know them, things as we have them, cannot get to us, nor we to them, except they come under the forms of number and proportion: I am quite sure of that. And I am equally sure, that they cannot relate themselves to each other and to us ; we have to do it for them. We are the thinkers, and they are the things.

This fact, that number and proportion create our universe as we have it, did not escape the notice of those whom we call the Ancients. They paid profound regard to numbers, and had strange notions about them. It was the doctrine of Pythagoras, that numbers have their own sacred purposes and meanings: that each number is divine, and performs its hidden work in the general plan of things. The like reverence for numbers is in those recurrent sevens and twelves which sound through the Bible as the striking of a clock sounds through the house: and in those measurements which Saint John attributes to the Heavenly City. We have learned to hate all superstition: we properly despise any educated man or woman who believes in "lucky numbers": but

some superstitions, degenerate and feeble now, hark back to a faith livelier than themselves: and there was nothing amiss in the opinion of the Ancients—though they played fancifully with it—that number and proportion are like the quality of mercy, "an attribute of God Himself." For they are: just as much as mercy.

Number and proportion, weight and measure, are the law of the kingdom of things. Some of the things are too light or too heavy to be weighed: some are too small or too large to be measured: but they are all under the law. All mechanics and physics, all chemistry, all study of electricity—these come first to mind, when we consider the law of the kingdom: for they are concerned with non-living matter, with number and proportion in the things of inanimate Nature: and we always look at non-life before we look at life. We arrange Nature as a procession. The lesser folk to start with, the police and the local fire brigade; then the more notable representatives, the magistrates, the aldermen in their furred gowns, the important personages: last, the Great Man, in a carriage drawn by four horses—the last of the procession, for which the first was made. Queen Victoria is said to have said that Mr. Gladstone addressed her as if she were a public meeting. We address Nature as if she were the Lord Mayor's Show. Non-life is just as natural as life; but we do always put non-life before life, when we are addressing Nature: we lead

up from what we call the lowest to what we call the highest: and we begin, as it were below the lowest, with what we call matter.

Dead, inert, senseless matter—oh, the stupid adjectives. Science has so finely divided and sub-divided and sub-subdivided matter that molecules and atoms have ceased to be small. *Molecule* is the Latin for a little mass: *atom* is the Greek for an indivisibility. Science has found these little masses and indivisibilities so massive and so divisible that she has taken not particles, but particles of particles, to be her units of matter, her electrons. You and I cannot have any idea of electrons: it is not one of us in fifty thousand who can. I try to imagine them: and the more I try, the more I fail. But this I know, that they are under the law of the kingdom of things: they have number and proportion: they are in relation to each other: and they build up, somehow, that which has weight and measure, and is visible and tangible.

Chemistry, if you compare it with these most subtle researches into the nature of matter, is a wholesale business, dealing with things in bulk. The law of number and proportion is writ large all over chemistry: never for one moment does the chemist get away from weight and measure. This exactness of study, this insight into the atomic natures of things familiar to us—the metals in our pockets, the paving-stones under our feet, the sugar in our tea—

make chemistry a most excellent training, a most delightful pursuit. Besides, there is a sort of magic in it, an echo of the last enchantments of the Middle Ages. It is a grand science for girls: especially for them who will have to earn their own living. There was Pasteur, a chemist: there is Mme. Curie, a chemist: no pursuit affords us better examples.

The study of inanimate Nature goes far beyond physics and chemistry. The whole earth is subject to geology: the other heavenly bodies, to astronomy. The kingdom of things is extended beyond all reckoning. Where the law is, there the kingdom is. The law is over all inanimate Nature. What about Life? Is the law over all that has Life?

Of course, it is impossible for us to say what Life is. None of us can define or describe Life: no, not even if we spell it without a capital letter. Bichat, a great French physiologist, called it "the sum of the functions which resist death." Nail that phrase to your counter, for the false coin that it is. But where he failed, you and I are not likely to have any success.

But we can observe life without defining it. We can trace it back, almost to its sources: and the men of science are still exploring them, and may some day find them. Fifty years ago, life was regarded as "specially created": made and put on earth, once and for ever: perpetuated, *omne vivum ex vivo*, but not generated. No conjunction of non-living forces

could make life. Science was all very well: but imagine a man of science making life!

In these opinions, there was timidity of religion, and poverty of imagination. It was a mere trick of words, to attach the word *specially* to the word *created*. It reminds me of a dear old lady who said to me that a young man of her acquaintance was Such a teetotaller. Nothing is specially created: everything is created. You might as well say that two and two make four when you are playing with cherry-stones: but when two Princes marry two Princesses, two and two specially make four.

Nothing being more created than everything else, there is no reason why life should not be always being created, just as everything is always being created. We are free to believe in life coming into existence by the conjunction of non-living forces, as flame comes into existence by the conjunction of a safety-match with the component strip of paper on the match-box: life beginning, in a very humble way, but really beginning, here or there, wherever circumstances are prepared for it. The depths of the sea, for all we know to the contrary, may be employed on munitions of life. Here I am rushing in where Sir Edward Schäfer lately feared to tread. But we shall some day be no more surprised at life "coming of itself" than we now are surprised at flame coming of itself. Pasteur proved that germs do not come of themselves, neither germs of putrefaction nor germs

of infection nor any other germs: but he did not forbid us to believe that life, under conditions not yet ascertained, may come of itself. You may live to see men of science making life.

But the life which they will make, after all, will not be worth the trouble of making, except as a curiosity. We shall have to take their word for it. Perhaps, at the Royal Institution, they will demonstrate some flickering change in a teaspoonful of stuff compounded in a test-tube, some ebb and flow of movement in a film of liquid under the microscope, some oscillation of the needle of a galvanometer, some new band in the field of a spectroscope. *Such is life*, they will say: and so shall we: and all the newspapers will flare with headlines, Man Makes Life. But this artificial life, this quickening of a prepared fluid in a test-tube, hardly would be what we mean by life. It would not be a living thing: it would be without form, and void. The least of little germs is a creature, a bodily thing, with properties and structure of illimitable complexity—if only our microscopes were stronger. These properties and this structure are individual: each germ has its own. Men of science may succeed in making life: but will they ever make lives? Will they ever make separate structures, each with its own life?

Look well at this difference between life and lives. We never ought to let it out of our sight: no, not for a moment. We are so careless, talking and writ-

ing, that we sometimes forget it, and arrive at conclusions with no logic to cover them.

By life, I do not know what I mean. By lives, I mean structures, each with a life of its own. That a germ is a structure, and has properties, none of us can doubt: but you may prefer to look at something larger than a germ. Take, for example, ants' eggs. Plainly, they are individual structures, each with a life of its own. When this life attains its full stature, it is a life of no ordinary merit. The brain of an ant, says Darwin, is perhaps the most wonderful bit of living matter in the world. That is enough for me. Here will I linger, contemplating the ant's egg, shrine of my pilgrimage, birthplace of one of the most wonderful lives ever given to earth. Within this humble dwelling, she was created and made, brain and all, and all in all, as Tennyson puts it, that I might consider her ways and be wise. If this first home of hers were large enough, I would place a mural tablet on it, with an appropriate inscription. Stay, O traveller, and admire this frail tenement, empty now, yet not empty, for it is thronged with sacred memories of an Ant. Her Instincts wellnigh deserved the proud title of Rational Conduct. She displayed throughout her brief Career qualities which earned for Her the praise of a Man of Science. Learn wisdom, O traveller, from Her.

I cannot see anything extravagant or fulsome in this estimate. But let us look where we are standing

now. Are we still in the kingdom of things, under the law of number and proportion? We speak of a life lived by an ant. What do we mean by that? *Structures*—well, we had formed some idea of them. *Lives*—well, we had formed some idea of them. But see where we are now. There is the structure of the ant: there is the life of the ant: and there is—the ant. That is what we are saying. Are we prepared to defend our words?

Let us try the effect of dressing them up, in the style of the old nursery-rhyme. This is the egg that ant A laid. This is the structure that lay in the egg that ant A laid. This is the life that was in the structure that lay in the egg that ant A laid. This is ant B, that owned the life that was in the structure that lay in the egg that ant A laid. And this—it spoils the metre, but this is we, who have just asserted our belief in the immaterial consciousness, or self, of ant B: and the same with all the other ants in the alphabet.

It is a tremendous belief. We shall hold it, and drop it, and leave it behind us, and go back for it, like a lady with a reticule, over and over again: we shall come to the end of our own lives before we have made up our minds about the ant's life. But the point is, that we shall get no help from Science. It is idle, to ask Science to teach us Philosophy. You might as well ask one of Euclid's diagrams to give you singing-lessons. Science will not tell us

what self is. She would if she could: she tries, but she cannot do it.

It may be very silly, to fall to guessing whether ants are conscious: very silly, to hesitate, over an ant, between *it* and *her*. Well, if it be silly, put aside the problem: call it fantastical, scholastic, pedantic, unpractical: that is what the fox called the grapes, when he could not jump high enough for them. Put the problem aside: be really scientific. Among physiologists and anatomists, the ant is *it*: among naturalists, who are inclined toward poetry, the ant, now and again, is *she*. Science does not care which of these pronouns the ant is. And the reason why she does not care is, that she does not know. The answer to the problem—if there be an answer—is not to be found in the kingdom of things, and is not decided by the law of the kingdom of things.

As we ascend from the lives of ants to the lives of men, women, and children, we seem to be getting away, gradually, from our place in this kingdom, our submission to this law. We find ourselves a bit restless, when Science tells us not to fidget, and not to ask so many questions. We can see that she leaves out of her reckoning the item of consciousness. The higher we go up the scale of lives, the larger this item is. At first, we did not mind if she left it out: at last, we do. When we get up to Man, and find her still leaving out of her reckoning this fact of

self, we begin to feel cross. She offers us Psychology, as a substitute for Philosophy, to keep us quiet. We resent that. Psychology is no more Philosophy than margarine is butter. Then we begin to cry, and to say that we are tired of the kingdom of things: that we want to go back to the kingdom of thoughts, and play games there. And Science does not care if we do cry. That is the way of Science. When she first speaks to us, in the kingdom of things, we say "It is the voice of a God." And, in that kingdom, it is. In the kingdom of thoughts, it is not. The kingdom of thoughts is full of problems which none of us would ever dream of referring to Science.

V

MOVING PICTURES

I

We are so accustomed to moving pictures, that we do not trouble ourselves to study their nature, or their place in the general order of things. We take them for granted. Youth, especially, takes them for granted, having no memory of a time when they were not. But some of us were born into a world in which all the pictures stood still: and I challenge youth to defend the cause of moving pictures. Let the lists be set, and the signal given for the assault. On the shield of youth, the motto is *Moving Pictures are All Right.* On my antiquated shield, the motto is *Pictures Ought Not to Move.*

Pictures, of one sort or another, are of immemorial age. Portraits of the mammoth were scratched on gnawed bones, by cave-dwellers, centuries of centuries ago: and we look now at their dug-up work, and feel ourselves in touch with them. The nature of pictures was decided at the very beginning of things, as the natures of trees and of metals were

decided. It is not the nature of trees to walk, nor of metals to run uphill: it is not the nature of pictures to move. Pictures and statues, by the law of their being, are forbidden to move. That commandment is laid on them which Joshua, in the Bible-story, lays on the sun and the moon—*Stand thou still.* They must be motionless: 'tis their nature to: they exist on that understanding, as you and I exist on the understanding that we are mortal. If I were not to die, I should not be a man. If pictures were to move, they would not be pictures.

So we come to this difficulty, that moving pictures are not pictures. We cannot evade it by giving another name to them; for it is a difficulty not of names but of natures. Let us examine it with decent care.

Moving pictures have got mankind in their enchanted net. They have unfailing power over us. Old and young, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, we are all under their spell. So magical are they, that every owner of a picture-palace would have been burned alive, not very long ago, for diabolical practices. The world is their scenery, life is their repertory, and all things in earth and air and sea are their company. They will give you, like the strolling players in Hamlet, what you desire:—

> The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited.

Every little country-town is familiar with this vivid and precipitate entertainment. No other invention of our time—neither the electric light, nor telephones, nor aeroplanes, nor all three of them together—can show such a record of change wrought on us. Well then, what is wrong with moving pictures? Is anything wrong with them? Why should not pictures move, now that they can?

No, they must mind their own business, and do their duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call them. It is not their business to move. If they were to move, the effect would be horrible: it would kill our enjoyment of them. Imagine how we should feel, if sculpture could be made to move: statues of Royalty bowing this way and that, statues of orators waving scrolls, and statues of generals waving swords: the lions in Trafalgar Square shaking their manes, and Miss Nightingale in Pall Mall raising and lowering her lamp. We should be pleased for a day or two, then bored, then disgusted. Imagine our pictures moving: the photographs on the mantelpiece, the advertisements, the big Raphael in the National Gallery.

The advertisements would matter least, because nobody cares how advertisements behave or misbehave. I have one in front of me, at this moment, from a religious journal, of a patent medicine which "creates cheerfulness by cleansing the system of its poisonous bye-products." There is a picture of two

men, one moping, the other alert. I should not like to see it move. I prefer it as it is. My imagination is free, so long as the picture is motionless; but would be hindered, if the picture moved.

The photograph of a friend, on my mantelpiece, gives play to my remembrance of him. Within the limits of photography, it is perfect. But if it moved —if its eyes followed me about the room, and its hands had that little gesture which he had with his hands, and its lips opened and shut—it would be hateful, and I should throw it in the fire.

The great pictures in the National Gallery—the Rembrandt portraits, the Raphael Madonnas—imagine them moving. Their beauty would vanish, their nature would be destroyed. The Trustees would immediately sell them, to get rid of them. Probably, they would go on tour: admission threepence, children a penny. Then they would be "filmed," and the films would be "released," and a hundred reproductions would be gibbering all over the country. The originals would finally be bartered, in Central Africa, to impressionable native potentates, in exchange for skins or tusks: and if pictures were able to curse, these certainly would curse the day on which they began to move.

By these instances, it is evident that pictures ought not to move. The worse they are, the less it would shock us if they did. The better they are, the more it would shock us. Why must they not move?

Because they are works of art. It follows, that moving pictures are not works of art.

They are works of science: they are "scientific toys." Science invented them, just for the fun of inventing them: made them out of an old "optical illusion." They are that friend of my childhood, the zoëtrope, or wheel of life, adjusted to show the products of instantaneous photography. They are "applied science." You are so familiar with them that you overlook the ingenuity of them. Here I have the advantage of you: for they came so late into my life that I was properly amazed at them. My first sight of a moving picture, like my first sight of an *x*-ray picture, was a revelation not to be forgotten. There was a procession of cavalry: and when I saw a photograph whisking its tail, I marvelled at a new power come into the world, and am still marvelling. But you will never get the full delight of moving pictures till you have lectured with them, been behind the scenes, handled films, and become well acquainted with those hot little fire-proof chambers where the wheels are set spinning, and the great shafts of light are projected, and out of the whirlwind of electrical forces the picture flings itself on the screen. Only, for this invention, give honour where honour is due, to Science.

But scientific inventions, unlike works of art, have an immeasurable power of growth and development. They can be improved *ad libitum*: they can be multi-

plied *ad infinitum*. Nothing could be less like a work of art coming from a studio than a scientific invention coming from a laboratory. The work of art is made once and for all: it may be copied, but it cannot be repeated: you cannot have two sets of Elgin Marbles, or two Sistine Madonnas. The scientific invention is like the genie who came out of the fisherman's jar: you cannot tell where it will stop, nor what it will do next. Moving pictures may be nothing more than a scientific toy, but they are the whole world's favourite toy: the whole world is playing with them: and if they were suddenly to be taken away, the whole world would miss them. Think what a colossal enterprise this world's plaything now is: what legions of lives, what millions of money, are spent over the production, multiplication, and exhibition of moving pictures. Famous actors pose for them, thousands of secondary actors make a living out of them, the ends of the earth are ransacked for new scenes and subjects: even politics, and international rivalries, are dragged in the train of this huge industry. I have read of the factions which divided the people of Byzantium over their chariot-races: but these were nothing to the world's submission to moving pictures. Is there any limit to their kingdom, any measure of their influences? These factories and companies and wholesale houses and palaces and flaming advertisements everywhere—what will be the end of it all? Thirty years hence,

will they have more power over us than they have now, or less?

I hope they will have less, and will use it more carefully. I should like to see the War bring down the moving-pictures business to one-third of its present size, bring it down with a rush, and with the prospect of a further reduction. Picture-palaces in London are like public-houses: too many of them, too many of us nipping in them; too many people making money out of us, whether we be nipping in the palaces or the houses. The more we patronise them, the more they exploit us: and some of us are taking more films than are good for us. *Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?* But we can easily get so fond of cakes and ale that we spoil our appetites for our regular meals. Besides, our cakes ought to be wholesome, and our ale ought not to be adulterated. The bill of fare, at the picture-palaces, includes trash: but it pays them to sell it to us: and we behave as if these palaces belonged to us, while they behave as if we belonged to them. Picture-palaces and public-houses, alike, amuse all of us and enrich some of us: they do good, they do harm: they have to be watched, these by censorship, those by the police: and both these and those are backed by wealth, and by interests too powerful to be set aside. The differences between them are accidental: the likenesses between them are essential. The moving-pictures

trade is the younger of the two: and the result on us of too many films is different from the result of too much liquor. But these differences are not very profound: and the likenesses are plain enough. They would be even more plain to us, if we could have our moving pictures at home, as we have our liquor, out of a bottle. We have to go into the street for them: we have to consume them on the premises. If we could have them at home, as it were in half-pints, all to ourselves, we should more distinctly feel it our duty to draw the line at one or two, for fear of getting into a habit of them.

II

What is the nature of moving pictures? What are they "of themselves," and where do they come in the general order of things? Take, for instance, a waterfall. If we look at a waterfall, we see water moving. If we look at a picture of a waterfall, we imagine water moving. If we look at a moving picture of a waterfall, we see a picture moving, a very beautiful object: still, we are looking at an "optical illusion," not at a waterfall. Or take a more critical example: take a moving picture which not merely moves, but acts. What is it, really, that we are looking at, when we see, on the screen, Hamlet, or How She Rescued Him, or Charlie Chaplin? It was my privilege and honour, in the first winter of the War, to give lantern-lectures to soldiers, on the

protective treatment against typhoid fever: and one happy day, we had Charlie Chaplin, till it was time to have Pasteur and the bacilli of typhoid. Besides, I have met his flat effigy, again and again, outside the palaces: that little hat and moustache, and the look of Shelley about the eyes, and that suit of clothes, and the little cane which, like General Gordon's, is so curiously personal and inseparable from him. So I feel that I know him; and I know that I envy him: for he makes, they say, a very large income: and the laughter which he gave us that day was as clean and wholesome as the smell of a pinewood: which is more than you can say of all picture-house laughter.

But what is it, really, that I was looking at, on the screen? He is an actor equal to Dan Leno: the same unfaltering originality, the same talent for dominating the scene, holding our attention, appealing to us by his diminutive stature, his gentle acceptance of situations as he finds them, his half-unconscious air of doing unnatural things in a natural way. But think what we lose in the transition from Dan Leno on the stage to Charlie Chaplin on the screen. Dan was really there: Charlie is not. Dan talked and sang: Charlie is mute. Dan's performance was human: Charlie's, by the cutting of the film, and by the driving of the machine at great speed, is superhuman. In brief, on the Drury Lane stage I saw Dan Leno, and heard him: but on the screen I do not see Charlie Chaplin—let alone hearing him: I

see only a moving picture of him: and this picture so cleverly faked that I see him doing what he never did nor ever could. It was delightful, every moment of it: all the same, it is an optical illusion. Nor is it a straightforward illusion, like the old zoëtrope: it is rendered grotesque and fantastical by the conjuring-tricks of the people who made the film.

Still, he was delightful; for it was pantomime, dumb-show, knockabout farce, with a touch of magic in it. But I could not bring myself to see Macbeth or Hamlet on the screen; for I have seen Irving's Macbeth and Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet, heard their voices, learned my Shakespeare from them. Shakespeare without the words, Shakespeare without the living presence of the actor, would be intolerable. You can see, or lately could, at the "Old Vic" in the Waterloo Bridge Road, for threepence, Shakespeare acted, nobly acted, with simplicity and with dignity. Let nothing ever induce you to see him "filmed."

Of the rest of the legion of filmed plays, let him write who can. The output of the London picture-palaces, in farce, comedy, drama, and melodrama, can hardly be less than two thousand plays twice in every twenty-four hours. Many of them are American: and those that I have seen were condensed, pungent, over-acted, and spun too fast. Now and again, a book is filmed as a play: for example, East Lynne, and Les Misérables. The effect of a filmed book

might be very good: for you might get a pleasant sense that you were reading it with moving illustrations. The ordinary theatrical films cannot give you this sense. They are surprisingly clever. Only, the better they are, the more you want to have the real thing: to hear the voices, to see the players themselves. You cannot be properly thrilled by the best of heroines tied to a stake, nor by the worst of villains with a revolver: she is shrieking at the top of her voice—look at the size of her mouth—but where is the shriek? He fires—look at the smoke—but where is the bang? You are mildly excited: but you are not so excited as you ought to be: you know, all the time, that you are not at the play: you are at an optical illusion, looking with more or less interest at a scientific toy.

Give me leave to hammer at this point: for I want to make it clear to you and to myself. First, let us be agreed that a play on the stage is worth a thousand plays on the screen: for it is the real thing: it is real voices, living presences: the interpreters are there, as real as real can be. The artifices and conventions of play-acting do not spoil the reality of the play: it is only unimaginative minds which are baulked by them. A good play, well acted, satisfies and educates something in us which nothing else can reach. Call it the imagination, or the emotions, or whatever you like: the love of a good play is too old and too natural to care what name you give to it. A play

on the screen is not real: there are neither voices, nor presences: there is only a moving picture, moving too swiftly to be a good picture of a play. You cannot command, over an optical illusion, the imagination and the emotions which come of themselves over a real play. They refuse to be fooled. *Wrong number*, they say, and put the receiver back on the hook.

It follows, that the best plays, on the screen, are those which can best afford to lose the advantage of voices and presences, and to be taken for what they are. Wild farce, with lots of conjuring-tricks in it, is the best of all. In pantomime, with a film so faked and speeded-up that fat men run a mile a minute, and cars whirl through space like shooting stars, and all Nature is convulsed, these picture-plays are at their best, joyfully turning the universe upside-down with the flick of a wheel. In the mad rush of impossibilities, there is no time for words, and no need of them. When Charlie Chaplin, for instance, leaned lightly against a huge stone column, and immediately it fell to bits, I did not want him to say anything: no words of his could sober an event so stupendously drunk.

But more ambitious films, which pretend to give us comedy and drama, are less successful. You miss the sound of voices: you miss the presence of the living actors. The poorer the play is, the less you miss them. Thus, you can enjoy, for the few

minutes of its existence, a sensational film, a bit of claptrap and swagger: but Heaven forbid that you should enjoy Shakespeare filmed, with scraps of words thrown on the screen at short intervals.

Judge the performance of a moving picture as you judge the performance of a gramophone. Each is a scientific toy: each produces an illusion, the one through our eyes and the other through our ears: and each gets its best results by staying inside its natural limits. Comic sounds, comic songs, swinging band-music with lots of brass and big drum in it, go well on a gramophone. But do you want to hear high-class music on it? Do you want to hear the voice of a dead friend on it? Not you: let it stick to being a gramophone: let it not profane either the music of the Immortals, or the voices of the dead.

III

The answer comes, that all this talk is tainted with self-conceit. That you and I are superior persons, forgetful of "the masses." That the picture-palaces enliven the dullness of thousands of stupid little country-towns, and are a safe refuge of entertainment for legions of young men and young women who would have no other meeting-place but the streets. That moving pictures amuse the whole nation, and quicken the mind and widen the outlook and charm the leisure of countless lives more heavily burdened

than yours and mine: lives of the hard-driven ill-educated "masses," who cannot be expected to care for Shakespeare and the National Gallery.

And there is much truth in this answer. Only, it is a one-sided statement. If you could take the opinions of London working-women, with families of young children, just enough wages coming-in to keep a home over their heads, and a flaming picture-palace, with a lot of nasty trash on its programme, just round the corner, you would hear many opinions unfavourable to *them rubbishy pictures*: many descriptions of the children's nerves upset by sham horrors, and the children's pennies wasted on stuff which ought to be labelled Poisonous. The chief business of the palaces is to make money out of us. Where it pays them to give us rubbish, there they give us rubbish: where it pays them to raise a laugh over something disgraceful to us, there they set themselves to be blackguardly.

But praise them for that great gift which they, and they alone, can give to us. Moving pictures of real things, moving pictures of real life—we can never be too thankful for these. It is these, which are the new power come into the world. To watch, on the screen, every moment of the swing of waves and the dash of surf, every fleck of light on a river, every leaf stirring in the wind, is a grand experience: you find yourself watching them with more attention than you bestow on real water and real woods. For, on

the screen, you are looking at pure movement, all by itself: you are not distracted by any thought of bathing in that sea, or of going on it: you just watch it, enjoying the mere sight of it moving.

In the display of moving pictures of real things, all the way up from elemental movement to human action, the picture-palace is our good friend: it is servant, by divine appointment, to reality. Moving pictures of living germs of disease, colossally magnified by the adjustment of micro-photography to the making of a film, are the delight of all doctors: moving pictures of wild creatures are the delight of all naturalists: scenes of human life in diverse parts of the world—the crowds in London streets, the crowds in Eastern bazaars, the work and play and habits and customs of the nations—these are the delight of all of us, and will never cease to delight us. For this wealth of visions, this treasury of knowledge, let us be properly grateful.

Only, the higher we go, the more careful we must be to exercise restraint and reverence. It is one thing, to film dumbshow, and another thing, to film real life and real death. Of living men, whom shall we film, and under what conditions, that we may pay sixpence to see them without loss of dignity in them, and without loss of reverence in ourselves? Crowds are not the difficulty: for they are comedy: but we ought to think twice before we film the tragedy of a crowd of people scared or starved. The difficulty

is with single figures of great men, or a little group of them, or a multitude of men employed in the business of a great tragedy. Have we any rule, in this matter, to guide us?

During the last few weeks—here is mid-September—we have been made to think over these questions, by the proposal to film the Cabinet, and by the exhibition of the Somme pictures.

The proposal to film the Cabinet was abandoned. The plan was not to film a real Cabinet Council, but to film the Members of the Cabinet, in the Council-room, looking, more or less, as if they were holding a real Council.

Thus, it would have been a picture of real life, but of real life posing for the camera. His Majesty's Ministers would have put themselves under some of the conditions of acting for a picture-play. This they would have done to please us: they would have shown themselves to us, looking just as they look when they are at work for us. The objection was raised, that the Cabinet would lose dignity: you will find a parallel passage in Shakespeare [1]: and the point

[1] First Part of *King Henry IV.*, Act III., sc. 2: where the King draws out the contrast between himself and King Richard:

> "Had I so lavish of my presence been,
> So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
> So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
> Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
> Had still kept loyal to possession....
> Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;

for us here is, that the value of a moving picture of a great man is lowered, if he is posing for it. There is no man too great to be filmed, if only he be unconscious of the process, or absolutely indifferent to it: but it is said that the one King who has posed in a group taken for his political advantage is Ferdinand of Bulgaria. *Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.* Much comfort will his people have of this moving picture of him, six months hence.

But the Somme pictures: the official pictures, taken for our Government, of the advance on the Western Front. A moving picture of a little group of great men, behaving as the camera expects them to behave, might deservedly fail to have power over us. But here are legions of men, not under orders from the camera, but employed in a business of

> My presence, like a robe pontifical,
> Ne'er seen but wondered at: and so my state,
> Seldom, but sumptuous, showed like a feast,
> And won, by rareness, such solemnity."

Then, the contrasted behaviour of Richard, who

> "... gave his countenance, against his name,
> To laugh at gibing boys, and stand the push
> Of every beardless vain comparative;
> Grew a companion to the common streets,
> Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;
> That, being daily swallowed by men's eyes,
> They surfeited with honey, and began
> To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
> More than a little is by much too much.
> So, when he had occasion to be seen,
> He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
> Heard, not regarded."

tragedy such as the world has never suffered till now: men great, not in the Westminster-Abbey sense of the word, but in the greatness of their purpose, in their unconquerable discipline, their endurance: they go into the presence of Death without looking back, and they come out from it laughing, some of them: you see them treading Fear under their feet, you see Heaven, revealed in their will, flinging itself on the screen. You and I, safe and snug over here, let us receive what they give us, their example.

Be content to see these pictures once: they are too tragic to be taken lightly: but see them, if it be only to understand what the picture-palaces might achieve for your country. That which began as a scientific toy has become a world-power. Certain firms, preferring money to honour, have turned it to vile uses, and have proved themselves to be enemies of the people. But things will mend: they will mend very slowly, but the War will help them to mend: and the picture-palaces will gradually learn to take us seriously, and to play down to us less, and up to us more.

VI

LONDON PRIDE

Old Londoners, as they drift about the streets, find themselves, now and again, in the company of one of the Immortals: but he stays only for a moment: not long enough to be questioned or worshipped. Mostly, it is when they are looking at a new building, a new statue, or a new advertisement: and the old Londoners are just opening their lips to say *Now I do like that*, when they are aware that Ruskin is close to them, frowning with angry contempt at what they were about to admire. And immediately they begin to see with his eyes, and to judge with his judgment. It is not that they ape him, or pose as critics, or think themselves to be superior people. His spirit is upon them: he does it by just being there. He compels them to look through the art to the artist; and to detect, in faults of workmanship, faults of workers. In his presence, they begin to discover little telltale signs of vanity in the building, commonplace in the statue, vulgarity in the advertisement. They have

a sense that all three are works of trade, not works of art: that they neither give happiness to the people who see them, nor gave happiness to the people who made them: and that there is something wrong with all of them, which is something wrong with all of us.

Perplexed by this vague sense of something wrong somewhere, these haunted men turn their attention to the life round them: that small percentage of "all of us" which at the moment is in the street. It is an average sample of London life: it appears to be satisfied with itself, and with things as they are: it does not appear to be depressed by the ugliness of anything, nor to be exalted by the beauty of anything. Then they look again at the building, statue, advertisement, or whatever it may be: and the faults are still there, and more evident than before.

At last, a game of battledore and shuttlecock is started. The old Londoners are the shuttlecock. The objects in front of them are one battledore: the life round them is the other battledore. It was Ruskin who invented this heart-searching game: the master of all of us, the greatest prophet, except Shakespeare, that we ever had: whose judgment of us and our works is of everlasting authority. He saw through and through externalities into the heart of things: and the spirit of his teaching will endure till the world is too cold for us and our works, and London comes to the natural end of its existence.

I

Is it possible, to imagine the end of the existence of London? There are people who pretend that they can tell our futures by the lines on our hands: but the lines on the map of London tell us nothing of the future of London. When I look at the palm of my hand, I am able to foresee one event, and one only, in the days which are still due to me: and that is my death at the end of them. But I cannot imagine the death of London: though Nineveh and Troy and Carthage are dead and gone, and many cities are dying of old age. They are exhausted, they have gone too far to recover; they are kept alive by tourists, as a man at the last may be kept alive by stimulants: but nothing more can be done for them. I am thinking of Ravenna, what is left of an Imperial city that was many miles long. A few great buildings remain, so beautiful that they are among the chief wonders of Italy: and on them Ravenna survives. Theodoric had his palace there, Dante died and is buried there: the Ravenna churches and baptisteries proclaim by their magnificence what the city was. It has had its life: it stays above ground, waiting to die. Cities have no title from the Gods to exist for ever.

But none of us can think of London dead and gone. At most, we can imagine it, ages hence, invaded, or burned, or changed out of recognition: and our imaginations are not given to us to be wasted

like that. Still, we may fairly try to look a little way ahead. But if we are to look ahead, we must look round. That is the method of all prophets: they look ahead by looking round, and they look round by looking ahead. Let us take our London as it is, that we may guess, you and I, at your London as it will be. I hope, if you desire length of days, that you will be here in 1980. What will be your surroundings in that year? Consider your present surroundings: and, that we may make a beginning somewhere, consider the present noisiness of London. If it should continue at its present rate of increase, I doubt whether you would greatly desire to continue to live till 1980.

The wise man, the captain of his soul, refuses to be turned from his course by the din of the streets: he sets himself not to mind it. But some of us have not this masterful self-control, and are hardly able to be indifferent to noises. An old gentleman of my acquaintance, on a visit to London, started to walk from Marble Arch to Oxford Circus. He did not get far: he was quickly stunned by the noise of Oxford Street. This is Hell, he said. Not a few of us in London are thus tormented; especially invalids and nervous folk. Besides, though you may accustom yourself to incessant noises, it does not follow that they are altogether harmless to you. Rivetters and boiler-makers may accustom themselves to the incessant reverberation of hammered metal:

but some of them become subject to "boiler-makers' deafness." A small bird in a cage might accustom itself to the beating of a tea-tray close to its cage: but probably its nerves would suffer—to say nothing of its offspring. You have almost to shout, in the great thoroughfares, to be heard. The fear is, that the play and subtlety of your mind may be dulled by the weight of the noise. Or you may be driven to the other extreme, and become not insensitive but over-sensitive.

Judge the noisiness of London with Ruskin's judgment. Every noise that is made is the fault of the person who makes it. If the noisiness of London were inanimate, like the sound of thunder or of a waterfall, we should not be offended by it. We are offended by it because it is animate. It bears witness, that the makers of it are disregarding the rights of pedestrians, shop-assistants, students, tired folk asleep, sick folk awake with pain. That is why the noises made by people whistling for taxis, and by motorists, are so vexatious to us. All these noises are harsh and abrupt: and some of them are downright imitations of the animal sounds of the body: and every one of them is made by some person or persons unknown. Even the chauffeurs of well-appointed motors, with elegant people inside, make these noises: it is hard to believe that the elegant people care either for us or for music. Likewise, the rougher sort of motor-cyclist makes them, as he tears

along, endangering his life and ours, knocking the traffic to right and left of him. We can hardly believe that he is quite unconscious of the effect which he is producing. Surely it gives him some pleasure, that he can force us to hear him far off and to get out of his way. Neither birth, nor education, nor achievement, ever stirred a finger to make him remarkable: but, like most of us, he desires to have power: so he flies at us, hooting. He does not want us to be fond of him: *Oderint dum metuant* might serve him for a motto: he does seem to want us to be afraid of him.

Other offenders are the coal-merchants, brewers, furniture-movers, builders, and so forth, who put on the streets huge grinding engines and trucks, because it pays them thus to shift their goods from place to place, and the law is on their side.

Not London, but Londoners, are the offence: not things, but thinkers who will not take the trouble to think. It follows, that the offensiveness of this or that noise is in inverse proportion to the number of persons who are making it. The noises which attend some public service, useful to all of us, are more tolerable than those which attend the behaviour of one man: the clang and rattle of trams and omnibuses are less offensive than the drumming of a solitary motor-bicycle. For the public vehicles befriend us, not intimidate us: they are faithful goodnatured creatures, obedient to the word of authority: but the

motor-cyclist, unless he be a soldier, a policeman, or a postman, is of no service to the public. He may be all by himself, or he may whirl at his side a young lady in a receptacle of the shape of a medicine-spoon: either way, he is amusing himself at our expense: and that is why the jabber which he makes with his engine so vexes us, and the blast of his hooter sounds as if he were swearing at us. We are offended not by his machine but by him. Perhaps we ought to transfer our adjectives—brutal, odious, vulgar, and so forth—from noises to their makers: it might serve to remind them of the immorality of noisiness. To make purposeless noises in London is just as bad as to leave a litter of papers and egg-shells after a picnic in the country. It adds insult to injury: the noise is the injury, and the person who makes it is the insult. If noises, like paper and egg-shells, were visible objects, and we could see them lying about, where the maker of them had thrown them, we should say that he or she was not considerate of other people's feelings: we might even say something more uncivil.

We are bound thus to regard the noisiness of London as an affair of conduct, of London ethics: but we can hardly judge between the rights of the individual and the rights of the community. How much noise has one Londoner any right to make? It is a difficult question. Only, you and I ought to note this sign of the times, that there are so many

disturbers of the peace of London. You and I can run away from them: but they represent the power of the people, and we cannot run away from the power of the people. It neither is shocked at its own strength, nor sees why you and I should be, nor cares if we are:—

> O, it is excellent
> To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
> To use it like a giant—

But things are mending, under the hand of the War. Pleasure makes less of the noise than it made before 1914: and national service makes more: and that is as it ought to be. Not for many years after the War, if ever, will London relapse to the ways of that merciless individualism which was in fashion before the War.

Within your life-time, the noisiness of London will be restrained, with some success, in more ways than one. Motor-vehicles of quieter habits will be invented. Main roads will be coated with some silencing compound of asphalt and rubber: already we have a Lethæan moment of it, on the roadway under the Euston Hotel: *the world recedes, it disappears*, for that one moment. The Government will "do something": the Home Office, a few months ago, forbade the use of taxi-whistles at night near hospitals for wounded officers in London: there is a thousandfold more waiting and wanting to be done. Best of all, the wilful makers of noises will begin to

be ashamed of their conduct: that quicker sympathy, which the War has driven-in to our hearts, will not fail us: and the insolence of unnecessary whistling and hooting will be toned down by purely spiritual influences.

II

But noise, after all, is a mere incident of traffic. Think what the traffic of London is. Under your feet, in the bowels of the earth, we tear round and round, continuous miles of us, in tubes and tunnels. On the surface of London, the shorn and parcelled traffic thrusts this way and that, crossing and circling and interlacing. You may live to see it overhead, in full swing: vast public air-ships, private aeroplanes, and all the sky policed with little guardian craft, whirring like poised hawk-moths, to keep the flying populace obedient to the rule of the road of the air.

Probably, the underground traffic will not be greatly increased during your life-time. By looping the loop, not vertically but obliquely, perhaps we might gain one more tube: but London already is so undermined that, if it were to split, water and gas and drainage and electricity and human lives would pour from it in torrents. Surely, not much more traffic can be diverted from the surface to the deep of London. The surface must be made to afford room for it. But what can be done, beyond what has been done, to relieve the congestion of the traffic? Where

streets are rebuilt, they are built of a goodly width. What more can be done?

This phrase, *the relief of congestion*, is borrowed from Medicine. A congested liver is relieved by abstinence; a congested brain, by rest and silence: but we cannot ask the traffic to abstain, rest, or be silent. The physician, it seems, must call-in the surgeon: there is need of operative treatment. Some of our surgeons are so skilful that they can join-up a blocked artery to a neighbouring vein: but this operation cannot be performed on London: for where are the veins? Perhaps great roads will be made, running straight from mid-London to all parts of the country: we hear talk of these "arterial roads": they would be, of course, arterio-venous. Looking at what has been done, of late years, to relieve the traffic, we find that more than one operation has sadly disfigured London. At Marble Arch, the Park has been cut back as it were with a knife: the Arch, which was the entrance to the Park, is now isolated on a refuge, as if it were waiting to get across to Sussex House. At Hyde Park Corner, likewise, the Green Park has been cut back; and the angles at which our lives may be taken are more numerous than ever.

You will see other improvements of this kind, before London is many years older. They will be invented to relieve the traffic of London, and to gratify the pride of London. There are two sorts

of London Pride: one is the most unpretentious plant that ever set itself to console a back-garden: but there is a London Pride which can only flourish on richer soil, such as it has found in Regent Street and the Mall.

The changes wrought in the Mall are more proud than beautiful. The pleasant side-aisles of small trees have been elbowed away by a Processional Road, very wide and very straight. Where the path from the Mall used to slip quietly through an old-fashioned gate into the country magic of St. James's Park, there now are big stone pillars with big stone balls on them. Where the slope of grass and the lilacs (surely there were lilacs), at the edge of the Ornamental Water, so pleased the eye and made such a good foreground to the Palace, there now is a heavy wall in the style of the Thames Embankment: as if the Ornamental Water were tidal, and the Palace not safe. We have paid in trees for these improvements: and one tree, in mid-London, is worth many tons of masonry. Look at Piccadilly Circus, look at Trafalgar Square, how they are sick for want of green trees.

Piccadilly Circus—there are ways of avoiding it, back-streets of escape, if you are on foot. But think how different it would look with trees. Imagine that fountain removed, which is no fountain, but a gloomy mass of wet metal. The winged figure is Gilbert's work, and is beautiful: it would add dignity and

grace to an old Italian garden, among cypresses and roses: it would be well placed in the National Gallery, as a treasure of noble workmanship: but Piccadilly Circus—see it with your eyes shut, that central deadweight gone, and half-a-dozen big plane-trees there, and in the middle of them a jet of water leaping twenty feet high, turning sunshine to diamonds.

Trafalgar Square, with a hold on history, which Piccadilly Circus has not, can better afford to be careless of appearances: it does not mind how it looks, so long as it uplifts the image of Nelson—

> Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world,
> Like a Colossus; and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs—

In this present year, the unending record of our losses brought us the news, in June, of Lord Kitchener's death. If it were possible to set apart in London, for a memorial to him, a site equal in extent to Trafalgar Square, how would you desire to see it laid out? Consider what has been done to "the finest site in Europe." One hero is in the sky, and three are on the pavement; Gordon is concealed behind the column; and King George the Fourth edges himself and his horse into the company of the heroes. The round basins like soap-dishes, now dry, now filled with turbid suds; the little stone posts, like stumps of teeth; the featureless parapet, the dismal pavement with a hole in it where the Bakerloo

tube discharges its contents; the lions with recruiting-appeals round their necks, like blind men's dogs with begging-labels; the plinth of the column handed over as a platform—we have so neglected the whole place that it has become a No Man's Ground, a disgrace to us. Gordon looks down, that he may not see the ugly desert which we have made: and King Charles turns his back on it, preferring to look toward the scene of his death. Surely, after the War, we shall be able to improve Trafalgar Square. Trees, to begin with, lots of little trees, if it were only in tubs, vivid green tubs; and flower-beds, and rhododendron-clumps, and some tall palm-trees round the column; and comfortable seats, and a cheerful kiosk or two for the sale of newspapers, and a shelter where the omnibuses pick us up and put us down. Later, when we have the money for it, we could set to work on the stumps and the soap-dishes. Only, let us have some trees, to begin with. May you live to see trees along many London thoroughfares: not miserable saplings in iron petticoats, but real trees, avenues of them. That storm, which last winter destroyed so many elms in Kensington Gardens and elsewhere, was an ill wind that blew nobody any good: it would have done better if it had wrecked some of our buildings and swept away some of our statues.

It would be a grand thing for London, if either Nature or Germany could follow a selective method

of destruction. I am prepared to give valuable information to the enemy: I have long had my eye on the buildings which I want him to smash. After one of the Zeppelin raids over London, I wished, as I looked at a damaged house in a back-street of dire poverty, that the Germans had pounded the whole street to dust and ashes. There are thousands and thousands of houses in London, not all of them in slums, which ought to be destroyed: nothing short of destruction would avail: for basement and area are the curse of them. Take any street of decent poverty, with houses at a rental of £60 or £70, and more than one family in each house: walk the length of it, up one side and down the other: and at each house inspect that sink of iniquity, the area. Morris, poet and artist and Socialist, dreamed of London past, London white and small and clean: I dream of London future, without basements. What is it, to live in a "fairly good" basement? You descend into it by dark breakneck steps; it is damp, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, stuffy when it ought to be cool, and biting-cold when it ought to be warm. In its cupboards the blackbeetle, *blatta orientalis*, shares groceries with the mouse. Into the area come fog, rain, dust, soot, and the refuse of the pavement, but little sunshine or fresh air. Across this narrow pit, the kitchen-window stares at a grimy wall and the door of a coal-cellar. I doubt whether you would retain, under the average conditions of basement-life,

your controlled nerves and your placid temper. And when the spirit moves you to make friends with the poorest of the poor, you will visit slum-basements, where rheumatism and consumption and drink scribble their names on the dirty wallpaper. They say—it is a very stupid saying—that God made the country, and Man made the town: they ought to add, that the Devil made the basements. What will be done, in the next half-century, to abolish the shame of them? Happily, the very worst are condemned and closed by our medical officers of health: but that good work does not go far enough. We cannot blow-up or pull-down miles of streets, and rebuild them: the future of London will continue to display this mark of the beast. Only, we ought to spend less money on vain-glorious architecture of questionable beauty, and more on the redemption of London from unquestionable ugliness and unwholesomeness.

III

Master, said one of the disciples, *see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.* Doubtless, his first sight of Jerusalem; he was staring wide-eyed at the Temple, and the fine two-storied houses; they so impressed him that he could not keep silent: and our Lord's answer came, with a touch of contempt for the mere size of *these great buildings.*

There is plenty to be said in favour of size, but

there is nothing to be said in favour of disproportionate size. No great building is a grand building, unless it has a grand purpose. St. Paul's does well to dwarf the houses in St. Paul's Churchyard: for it is "the house of God," and all houses of God have the right to dwarf all houses of men, and their churchyards too: not their memories, but their graves. But there is a big house in Mayfair, and a big house in Oxford Street, which are not, in the ordinary acceptance of the phrase, houses of God: they are a private house and a business house: and we get no pleasure from seeing them dwarf their neighbours. All questions of size are spiritual questions. For shopping, Oxford Street; for rank and fashion, Mayfair; for religion, St. Paul's. That bit of Mayfair was one of the best-proportioned streets in London, till that house was put in it, a feature too large for the rest of the face.

Have no reverence for the mere size of any building, nor for its mere weight and solidity: think first what the building is for. The size of the dome of St. Paul's is delightful, because St. Paul's is St. Paul's: the massiveness of the Tower of London is delightful, because it was built as a fortress and a prison. But weight and solidity without sufficient purpose are not worth looking at. I am thinking of the Gaiety Theatre, and of a business-house in Regent Street. The one provides light amusement; the other provides gossamer goods, laces, handker-

chiefs, lawn as white as driven snow. For these uses, very high walls of marble and of granite are excessive. The theatre, being in the Italian style, might do for a castle for Cæsar Borgia: the linen warehouse, armed in Northern granite, might do for Macbeth: but why should either of them, dealing in such flimsy goods, lay such a heavy weight on earth? And why is there a gold angel, with a trumpet for the Day of Judgment, on the roof of the Gaiety Theatre? At Chartres, on the roof of the cathedral, I have seen a mighty angel, with a proper sense of the world's tragedies, slowly turning in the wind this way and that, as if it could wake with its trumpet all the quick and the dead in Chartres. But this Gaiety angel is advertising something light, to make us forget anything so like the Day of Judgment as the War. I find it as offensive as its neighbour the Gryphon: I long to see it down, and its place taken by a gold spike or knob.

Going west from this unlucky angel, you come to the figures on the house of the British Medical Association: which are obscure of meaning, and too large for their niches; doing justice neither to the beauty and the suffering of the human body, nor to health and disease, nor to the greatness of Medicine and the importance of the Association: you welcome, after them, with a feeling of relief, the neat globe on the top of the Coliseum. Going north from the Coliseum, you reach Whitefield's Tabernacle in the

Tottenham Court Road before you see any other building of equal demerit: there is a haberdasher's shop, on the way, with huge stone dummies of quite indescribable hideousness, but I will not tell you where it is. If you do not care to go north, cross the desert of Trafalgar Square, and look at the statue of King Charles. You may chance to see it when the memorial wreaths are round it, with inscriptions on them, from people who believe that our present King is one of a long line of usurpers. Read the strange history of this statue: admire the beauty of the weather-worn carvings on the pedestal: admire to your heart's content the beauty of the statue, the dignity of its pose, the quiet visionary look of the face: it is the King himself. It even has the power to make you see what you think of him. If you are on the side of the Parliament, you see his narrowness, his obstinacy: if you are on the side of the King, you see the purity of his faith, and his invincible belief in the goodness of his cause.

Go back here—it sounds like that race-game which small children play—to the Palace. Imagine the day come for our King, in solemn state, to visit St. Paul's, there to give thanks for Victory and Peace. He is met, as he leaves the Palace, by the two figures, on the Victoria Memorial, which represent Labour. This place of honour, facing the Palace, was doubtless conferred on them and their lions by Royal command: and I congratulate them, but with a little

touch of jealousy, for I belong to a profession as laborious as Labour, and as loyal. But no artist would venture to design a statue to represent the Professional Classes: it would be unsightly, for it would be expected to dress like a gentleman: and it would not have a lion: though the Professional Classes are just as valiant as Labour at shutting the mouths of lions. But Labour—if the phrase may be forgiven—has got its foot in, opposite the Palace: and there they are, this man and this woman, standing before the King for his People: and I wish that the base of the Memorial had been made to turn round by machinery, so that Art and Science, who now look idly down the Mall, could sometimes revolve into the place of honour. I wish also that the frieze of the Memorial were not mermaids and mermen and dolphins, which have nothing to do with the Victorian Age, but one grand continuous historical pageant of the Navy, from galleons to super-Dreadnoughts, encircling and upholding the Throne for ever and ever.

From the Memorial, along the barren stretch of the Mall, comes the King, on this day of days, to the Admiralty Arch. It is divided against itself, half Admiralty, half Arch. Two stone ladies watch over it, one of them nursing a little gun. The Arch is not a triumphal arch: it is a right of way under a block of Government offices; along the top of them, is an ill-omened Latin inscription, which not one in

a thousand of us can translate. Real triumphal arches have nothing over them, nor ever had, unless it were some noble and eloquent work of sculpture, some winged figure or chariot-group. Through this archway, under one knows not what, the King passes, he who on this day ought to have nothing overhead but flags and garlands and sunshine, and the whole span of the sky for a triumphal arch.

Go down Whitehall slowly, dreaming more of the present than of the past. To your left, the War Office; to your right, the Admiralty, the Horse Guards, Downing Street: War is their beadle, War is their vengeance. Whitehall may be looking much as usual, except for more crowd in it; but you are in the midst of Imperial affairs so grave and so urgent that the past is hidden by the present. But find and read the little tablet on the Banqueting Hall: so many Londoners miss it. Then, by that drinking-fountain which was very cheerful and bright when it was new, but has become dull and tarnished, to the steps of Westminster Hospital; and look at the towers of the Abbey. They are nothing to be proud of: the design of them was completed, two hundred years too late, by Wren, whose genius was not for that style of architecture: they bear witness to its death, not to its life. The front of the Abbey has a way of appearing wide and stately on fine days when you are happy, but narrow and blank on wet days when you are miserable: all large buildings have this trick

of swelling and shrinking with changes in the weather and your temper.

St. Margaret's Church, close to the Abbey, like a small white kitten lying close to its mother, possesses a window which has no equal in all London for beauty and for history. At present, this window has been taken away and hidden somewhere, until the times do alter. When the War is over, and there is no more fear of Zeppelins, we shall get our treasures back: London is not London, with Queen Elizabeth under sandbags in the Abbey, and St. Margaret's without its window. Time enough to study St. Margaret's, with the help of Hare's Walks in London, when it has recovered its good looks. Meanwhile, note how the Abbey has decided the style of the modern buildings round it. There is Westminster Hospital, which is stage-castle Gothic: and Broad Sanctuary, which is civic Gothic; and the Houses of Parliament, bearing witness, by their quiet beauty, to the revival of Northern architecture in England: and the new Westminster Guildhall, delighting Londoners with the excellence of its design and the carefulness of its sculpture. All round you, the power of the Abbey is confessed, and the example of the Abbey is copied, if not with success, yet with decent regard: and the dear little column in memory of the Westminster boys who died in the Crimean and Indian wars divides its allegiance, as do all Westminster boys, between the Abbey and the School.

Thus the City of Westminster, just here, is a city that is at unity with itself. I remember a Westminster boy, when somebody praised the beauty of St. Paul's, saying *Well, you see, I was brought up under the shadow of the Abbey.* That is the distinctive mark of this group of buildings: they were brought up under the shadow of the Abbey.

Now turn round, quickly. Never mind the looks of the Westminster Palace Hotel. It has just ceased to be a hotel, and has become a political club-house. Nobody expects either hotels or club-houses to take after Abbeys. Neither is it a very ugly building. Besides, if it were, it still could answer, as Weir of Hermiston answered when he was told that his behaviour on the bench, at the trial of Duncan Jopp, was a hideous business—

> Heedious! I never gave twa thoughts to heediousness, I have no call to be bonny. I'm a man that gets through with my day's business, and let that suffice.

But look well at the Westminster Central Building. It seems to have set itself to disregard the feelings of the Abbey. So did its predecessor on that site, the Westminster Aquarium; an ill-fated place of entertainment, where fishes in tanks died, it was said, from the vibration of the District Railway. There also a young lady called Zazel was shot, twice a day, out of a dummy cannon: and there, in later years—I went to see her in the interests of medical science—

was a Spotted Lady. The Westminster Central Building, surely, might have expressed its regret for the architecture of the Aquarium, by exhibiting the utmost purity and restraint in its own style. It might have conceded that much to the offended Abbey. It might at least have refrained from calling itself the Westminster Central Building. There is only one central building in Westminster: and that is the Abbey.

Let us not misjudge this new building. It is admirably arranged, inside, for its purposes. It includes not only the Central Hall of the Wesleyan Church, and a Branch office of the London City and Midland Bank, but a dozen other offices. The multitude of its purposes seems to have affected the general scheme of its decoration. Over the chief entrance, two large figures droop unsupported, neither standing nor sitting, but festooned. They do not tell us what they represent: they can hardly be Religion and Banking. Other ornaments are Roman helmets, Roman cuirasses, modern flags, eagles, lictors' rods with axes, lictors' rods without axes, huge lyres, cymbals, and other musical instruments, huge Roman handlamps, not burning steadily, but seeming to have gone out and to be smoking in a draught, prows of Roman ships, and modern crowns. Examining the huge corbels, you discover that they are the four "mystical creatures" of the Book of Revelations, repeated over and over like the pattern of a wall-

paper, above windows which are labelled London City and Midland Bank.

What is it all about? If the vast building were a concert-hall, we could understand the musical instruments; though we might criticise the mixing-up of French horns and flageolets with Roman lyres. If it were a drill-hall, we could understand the armour; though we might criticise the mixing-up of modern flags with Roman cuirasses. But what of the lictors' rods, the Roman prows, the modern crowns? What of the four mystical beasts, recurring like the pattern of a wall-paper? Why have the lamps gone out? The trail of their smoke is two feet long. Are they an emblem of Architecture as a foolish virgin?

All this bewildering stone-work is lavished on the two sides of the building which everybody sees. The other two sides are startlingly plain: I could find nothing but two small masks, of the type which Ruskin called the "ignoble grotesque," yawning horribly at each other: and a few bunches of grapes. It is evident, that we are expected to admire and to enjoy the two sides which are dressed up. Well, try: give time to it: make up your mind, if you can, why each ornament is where it is and what it is. Take the building as an illustrated book. What do you learn from these illustrations? What does the book teach you? What is it saying or trying to say to you? Impossible, that it should have no message for you, not a word for you: all these tons of stone

devices, surely, were not made and affixed to the building for no more use than the two tail-buttons on a morning-coat.

Yet, try as you will, it will be hard for you to understand this building: harder still, to get any help or teaching or pleasure from it. The mere size and weight of it will not awe you: and the crowd of quarrelling ornaments, all talking at once, will only confuse you. What is it all for? What does it all mean? Truly, if you stand there till you have answered these questions, it is probable that a policeman will tell you to move on.

If, as in the fairy-story, you were allowed three wishes for London, be content with one. Wish for Ruskin back again. We have no prophet of London. We have prophets—there is one who might have done anything with us, might have made anything of us, if he had not so despised us—but there is no man doing what Ruskin did for us. You must have his spirit in you, before you can be a thoroughly good Londoner. Begin now, right away: teach yourself, so far as you are able, to see with his eyes and to judge with his judgment. Begin with his Edinburgh lectures on Architecture and Painting: they are in Everyman's Library; price a shilling. Then, the Crown of Wild Olive, which also is in Everyman's Library; read, especially, the Preface, and the Bradford lecture on Traffic. When you have carefully read these lectures and taken them to

heart, examine yourself: not by writing, but by looking. Visit some large work of London architecture: not old London, but new London: some brand-new Colossus for public amusement or for shopping or for civic affairs: some building which dwarfs its neighbours, and calls aloud to be admired.

First, measure its size and its strength, not as valuable in themselves, but as valuable, or valueless, in proportion to the size and strength of its purposes. Then, estimate the worth of its adornments. If there be any lettering, inscription, or advertisement on it, note every word that it says; and note, with equal care, what it leaves unsaid. If there be statuary on it, make-up your mind over each statue. Is it clearly representative, is it well designed, is it pleasant to look at, is it in the place where it ought to be? For instance, the figures of athletes, over the house of Gamage, are delightful: they are too high up, but they are delightful. But the nymphs over the public-house in the Tottenham Court Road, and the Duke of York atop of his column, and Athene over the portico of the Athenæum, are not delightful. You might compose an essay on this question, why Gamage's athletes are right, and the nymphs and the Duke and Athene are wrong. If the building over which you are examining yourself be devoid of statuary, note what other adornments it has: what knobs or spikes or flourishes of cast-iron, swags of fruit and foliage, grinning or scowling masks,

cherubs, or gargoyle-creatures. Inspect each of them at your leisure. Does it please you, does it please anybody, did it please the men who made it? Never mind the "general idea" of the building: refuse to "take it as a whole": narrow your judgment to this or that detail, one at a time. Question each separate cherub, *What are you there for?* and each mask, *Why are you pulling that face at me?* Judge point by point the evidence of these witnesses: let them tell you their sad story, how they were made like that, and cannot help being what they are: see, in the spirit of Ruskin, through them, to the makers of them.

Happily, when you have learned, so far as you can, to see things as he saw them, your eyes will be opened not only to the faults but to the everlasting beauty and splendour of London. Any one of us, with average wits, can find fault all day long. You will not stop at fault-finding: you will enter into the imperishable enjoyment of your London, you created for it, and it for you.

VII

UNNATURAL SELECTION

CHILDREN, said Huxley, cannot be too careful over the choice of their parents. You never knew him, nor heard him talk, nor watched the pale, keen, heavily-lined face, which could look so hard and so gentle, with its gleaming eyes, and its mane of grey hair thrown back: you were not here in those days. If it were possible that you should think any days so great as these in which you are, I would write of the greatness of mine when I was of your age. You cannot have Darwin over again: and, if you could, you might find no Huxley to fight his battles for him.

It is advice as light as air. Winged chaff, solid grain—you need both kinds of good advice, for your soul's health. Boys and girls, kept on a diet of all grain and no chaff, are in danger of contracting spiritual beri-beri. What is beri-beri? It is multiple peripheral neuritis, with emaciation and exhaustion. India, China, Japan, the Malay Peninsula, are sadly

familiar with this disease. It comes of living on milled rice, polished rice ; that is, rice deprived of its husk by milling. In the husk of rice, there is a special substance, a little trace of wonderful stuff, which preserves the exact balance of health in people who live on rice. For want of a touch of this stuff in their diet, many thousands of unhappy natives have suffered and died. Stanton and Fraser and other men of science worked the whole thing out. They produced the disease in pigeons, by merely keeping them on milled rice: they cured the pigeons by giving them rice-husks: they cured men, women, and children by the same method. So it is with the giving of good advice. Milled advice, polished, deprived of every shred of chaff, is indeed good and wholesome, so far as it goes: there is nothing bad or poisonous in it: only, it has not the saving touch of laughter. You digest it with ease ; but you are in danger of spiritual beri-beri: your unbalanced soul, in the midst of plenty, starving.

So here is an essay on the choice of parents: and I take for my text this saying of Huxley's. I am able to write with authority: for nobody has ever questioned the wisdom of the choice which I made for myself.

Before you select your parents, you must decide whether you will be the only child ; and, if not, how many brothers and sisters you will have. The notion of being the only child will powerfully attract you.

To have a room all to yourself, the love of both parents all to yourself, and your exalted place in their affairs, and your enjoyment of their belongings, all to yourself—it is a pleasant programme. You would be only, but not alone: you would live in them, and they in you.

But home-life is not always so kind to only children as it might be. The only child may be spoiled: and the spoiling of a child may be not remediable, like the spoiling of a clean collar, but wellnigh irremediable. Perhaps the irremediable spoiling of children is not very common: but when it does happen it is terrible. Again, the only child finds himself at some disadvantage among the grown-up minds: his concepts are not of the same size as theirs: he drifts in his cockle-shell boat from one great liner to another —from Father to Mother, from Mother to Nurse: they have secret understandings, they exchange overhead wireless messages which he cannot intercept. It is better to be one of a family of children. I advise you to choose the happy parents of not less than four. You will thus avoid the loneliness of onliness: besides, you will ensure your parents against the misery of losing all if they should lose you. And, of course, you will learn a thousand lessons from the give-and-take between you and the others.

When you have decided that you will be in a family, you must make up your mind, where you will

come. If you intend to be a girl, I advise you to come first of all: if you intend to be a boy, I advise you to come somewhere about the middle—*medio tutissimus ibis.* It is said that the eldest of the children is not likely to be the best of the children. If I were going to be a girl, I would take that risk, for the delight of being first of all. The risk, for girls, cannot be very serious: they are fairly safe, wherever they come. They are less subjected than boys to experimental methods of education: and they can assume the office of the first-born not with arrogance but with mild fervour, these young Vestal Virgins, sworn to keep the home-fires burning till they shall kindle from them home-fires of their own. But if I were going to be a boy, I would come somewhere about the middle: for this reason—there are other reasons, but this, like the reason why the seven stars are no more than seven, is a pretty reason—that I should wish to have a sister older than myself, and a sister younger than myself.

Now for the choice of your parents. You choose them, of course, already wed: they found their way to each other's hearts, and were pronounced to be man and wife together, before you thought of having them. And, unless you are set on being the first-born, I advise you to look out for a home not less than five years old. Give them time to learn each other's ways, and to adjust their two lives into one: so many touches go to the making of a home, and

none of them will be hurried or anticipated. Easy enough, to furnish a house: not so easy, to make a home. Choose therefore parents of approved constancy to their marriage-vows, and of tested love, who have waited five years, and been examined at the end of them, and taken honours. They have learned how to go hand in hand through pleasures and pains of all sorts and sizes. Then you slip in, and hold a hand in each of yours, and thus disparting them join them closer.

Boys must be especially careful in the choice of mothers, and girls in the choice of fathers.

If Mother be very beautiful, so much the better. It is a grand thing for a child, to have a very beautiful mother. Best of all, if she possesses beauty which endures, so that she is a joy for ever not only to her children but to her children's children: that beauty which is in portraits by Reynolds, persuading us that old age is more worth looking at than youth: and, as often as not, it is. There are mothers who are beautiful while they are young, and there are mothers who are beautiful always. Heaven be praised for both. And if your adopted mother, when you are grown-up, has lost her beauty—if the roses have gone from her cheeks, and the lines have come on her forehead, and the corners of her mouth droop, and she looks tired in the morning—then you must ask yourself, how much of it is your doing. Beauty may die in the course of nature, or may be killed, like

Julius Cæsar, with many wounds. *Et tu, Brute?* Had you no part in the deed? Shall I be Antony, and come down from the pulpit, and show the rents in the mantle, and the very wound that was made by the well-beloved? Not I: the passing of Mother's beauty is a pity, but not a tragedy: and if you did have something to do with it, probably the time when you were so ill took more out of her than all the times when you were so naughty.

I will not vex you with endless advice: I will not behave as if you were a small child in a toyshop, with half-a-crown to spend—Would you like this engine? Wouldn't you prefer a box of soldiers? How about a drawing-slate? Don't you want a horse with real skin, not painted?—till the child, distressed almost to tears, flings away the half-crown on the first golliwog that speaks to him. But there are two points which especially claim your attention. You are making the choice of a life-time. See to it, that she comes of a good family. And see to it, that she is thoroughly practical.

By a good family I mean, of course, a family with lots of good in it. These are the only good families that there are. Before you engage her, find out all about her people: make her tell you what she has been doing in her last place. Has she been with a family with lots of good and of go in it: with young olive-branches and old friends round about its table? Has she had experience in mothering her little

brothers and sisters, who will be—if you decide in favour of her—your uncles and aunts? Has she learned any useful accomplishment, in case she should not obtain such an appointment as you are thinking of offering to her? Has she been happy where she was, and worked well with everybody, and played and sung and danced and flirted and said her prayers and been taught to admire the right sort of things? Has she always said that she would know, if ever she had one, how to give any child of hers a good time?

If she answers all these questions in the affirmative, without reserve or affectation, you had better engage her at once, while you can. Indeed, you have found a perfect treasure. But you must see to it, that she is practical. Never have any mother who, in the opinion of other mothers well qualified to judge, is what they call feckless. Up the road, just now, I met a feckless hen with her chickens: she took me for an ogre: she squawked and fled, and half her brood went Exeter way and half went Sidmouth way: you do not want that sort of mother. She would forget, if you were her baby, the hours for your bottle: she would give her life for you, but she would lose her head over you. Good nurses would not stay with her: you would suffer from a succession of them, so swift as to produce the whizzing effect of a moving picture.

Over the choice of a father, some difference will arise between boys and girls. They will be agreed

as to the main lines of his character: they will expect from him every virtue under Heaven. Doubtless, they will be like Israel: they will desire a King: but the boys will want him for one set of uses, and the girls for another. To his daughters, a leader of men is a glory, like their hair: to his sons also, he is a glory; but one or more of the sons may burn their fingers, playing with that fire: may insist on following his profession, in the hope of turning his name to their advancement; may assume that they resemble him in grace because they resemble him in face; may reckon—no sin in such reckoning, but no security—that his friends will befriend them, his clients employ them, his greatness exalt them. This half-conscious calculating, this half-willingness to play him as if he were a hand of cards, is not unlikely to defeat its own ends. Therefore, if you intend to be a boy, think twice before you choose for your father a leader of men: lest you be tempted to trade where you ought to worship, like the money-changers in the Temple.

Other things being equal—but they never are—I advise you to choose a wine-merchant. That is what Ruskin did, and Lister. There must be something in it. Or you might even dare to imitate Pasteur: his father was a tanner, who had been a soldier. But I think that you will make straight for a leader of men, whatever I say. The magnificence of him will draw you, moth to his light; I cannot help being anxious about you. This much, at least, I beg of

you, that you will look out for a father—if you are determined to have a magnificent one—who has of himself, by spendthrift energy, by austerity of will, by disciplined ambition, made himself magnificent. If you want a Lord for father, have a man who earned and won his peerage—"no tenth transmitter of a foolish face"—have a man who so greatly served his country that a peerage came from the fount of honour as the loosened cork comes from a bottle of champagne. If you want a millionaire, have a man who acquired not inherited his wealth, but never cornered the necessities of life, nor gave himself to increase the attractions of death. Whomever you have, let him be a working-man: that is, a man who works very hard: not a man who fools away his time over meals and clubs. If he has risen from the ranks, by Heaven's plan for him, so much the better for you: he will be the more diligent to give you those advantages which his parents could not give to him.

Girls think less than boys of magnificence, and more of thought. A girl in search of a father will tend toward a scholar, a writer of words or of music, a man of science, or an artist. She will want an allowance from him: but pocket-money or no pocket-money, she will demand ideals from him. She would not like Father to be a failure: but she measures his success not by what he achieves, but by what he admires. His genius—so she calls it—is the god of her idolatry. If she hesitates, as well she may, to

give that name to it, none the less she is loyal to his work, encourages him, honours him, believes in him, always hoping against hope. Some day, she says to herself, he will make his mark on the world: and if he never does, that will not be his fault. Thus fond of him, she is lenient to his vague ways, his forgetfulness, his untidiness: more than lenient, she is indulgent. Only, if he should wrong her faith in him, by posing, or by shamming, or by any scamping or faking tricks of dishonest workmanship, she would be hard on him. What else can you expect of a girl, if her deity shows himself to be an idol, a self-complacent idol, with feet of clay?

Happily, such disillusionment is rare. Not once in a thousand times is the bond broken. It is a relationship of especial privilege, and of especial strength. It gives play, free from passion, to all that makes him a man and her a woman. Their life together is one long spiritual flirtation: they share secrets, compare experiences, and exchange wits: they argue, challenge, score, criticise, for the pure fun of it, like Benedick and Beatrice. They understand each other. They are two in one, as in a well-written song the voice and the piano are two in one, each accompanying the other. Boys are hardly able to get so close to their fathers: it requires what we call the feminine intellect. So I will not venture to advise girls over their choice of fathers. For they are by nature well able to decide. They are merciful, but

they are clear-sighted: they see through disguises and pretences, and are bold to attack, single-handed, Giant Solemnity and Giant Platitude, with all the ardour of Pilgrim's Progress. They are not likely to fall into the error of Ophelia, who chose Polonius for her father. Think what she must have gone through with him: how she must have despised his way of talking, his insatiable self-respect, his contempt for her, the prosiness of his sermon to her brother, the sight and the sound of him speaking to her lover—Polonius and Hamlet in the room together. Poor girl, drifting in the swim of that blackguardly Court, with no mother to help her, and with a tedious old fool of a father worrying her into cowardice and lying; till she was crossed in love, and drifted down one more stream, and got away from everybody. There are students of Shakespeare who say that he designed her in a mood not of tragedy but of comedy: that he intended her madness to raise a laugh. You might do worse than accept this theory: you will at least withhold your admiration from her: keep it for Cordelia, the everlasting heavenly pattern of a daughter not afraid of her father.

One more bit of advice I give to boys and to girls. I beg and pray them to take a proper interest in their fathers' work. Grave harm is done to home-life by neglect of this rule. *What's your father?* say the boys at school—especially at second-rate preparatory schools—to a new boy. If he cannot give them a

precise detailed account, with all items duly rendered, more shame to him. I bid him set himself immediately to learn what his father is. If your father be a man of science, read science: if he be an artist, learn the history, the principles, and the methods of his art: if he be in business, get to know your way in that labyrinth: if he be a farmer, learn farming. Perhaps it is his fault, not yours alone, that you are ignorant of the ins-and-outs of his work: he may have said to you, "Oh, it wouldn't interest you, what I'm doing: you wouldn't understand." Never mind whose fault it was: set yourself now to overcome your ignorance. You cannot honour your Father and your Mother, unless you honour with your attention his employment of his life.

I take pleasure in the Fifth Commandment for this reason, that I have never been tempted to break it: and I wish you no less happiness. There is a promise attached to it, a sort of bribe, which has no meaning for you and me: we cannot thus prolong our days. I find what I want in the half-dozen words, without that after-thought; and I find it all the more, now that my people have been dead these many years.

VIII

SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS.

The War has made us feel the strength of accustomed phrases which we used carelessly: it has taught us to look-out their meanings in the dictionary of our hearts, as we look-out the position of frontier-towns on the map. *Goodbye, good luck to you*: we said it lightly, time after time: we have said it heavily, this time. *God Save the King*: we sang it to wind-up a dance or a supper-party: now, we pray it. Formal prayers, which we took as incidents of public worship, have become personal remarks addressed to each of us. Before the War, the prayer for the Church Militant was a long general statement, of a rambling disposition, which might or might not come to delay the end of the service: now, the War has so empowered it, that inattention is harder than attention: it knocks at the heart, and requests the favour of an immediate answer. *All Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors*—you regret that circumstances over which you have no control prevent

you from including the German Emperor. *Thy Servant George our King*—you find yourself praying for your King as you never prayed for him before the War. *His whole Council, and all that are put in authority under him*—your thoughts fly off to Downing Street, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Munitions, and elsewhere: and from them to *all Bishops and Curates*, each of them doing his bit for the War, and some in khaki, and more than one with the Victoria Cross, and all working to bring Church and People closer together under the War and after the War. *This congregation here present*—you look round at them, trying to guess how many are in *trouble*, *sorrow*, *need*—why, in this War, who is not? The legions of us in mourning, the legions of us in hospital, are beyond your imagination of *this transitory life*. Finally, with consummate knowledge of you, the prayer comes right up to your heart and thunders on the knocker, bidding you to commemorate the dead, your own among them, and to follow the example of their lives. Before the War, it was only one or two who came to you for remembrance: now, the whole continent of your mind is crowded with young men killed in action, who show you their hands and their sides: men whom you never thought of, before the War.

This prayer might help us in our choice of memorials of the War. It commends to us loyalty, obedience, fellowship, compassion, faithful remem-

brance. Is there any way of working them into a design for a memorial? They are matters of conduct, not of taste: we could not go wrong over them: it is over matters of taste that we are likely to go wrong. There will be memorials everywhere, after the War: and they ought to be not only in good taste, but of a spirit which will continually do good so long as they stand. If you are wanting a memorial—*si monumentum requiris*—for your school, or for your town, what shall it be, and what shall it say?

Imagine yourself at a public meeting, to discuss these questions, in a town of 30,000 inhabitants. Suggestions wheel and call round you like sea-gulls. The desire to have something beautiful clashes with the desire to have something useful. A window, a statue, a clock-tower, a drinking-fountain, each of them has its advocates. Others are in favour not of building anything new, but of restoring something old: they would repair the remnants of a market-cross, or a group of almshouses. Others would neither build nor restore, but would buy a piece of waste ground and lay it out as a public garden, with flower-beds and seats and gravel paths, and a big sand-pit for the children. At the end of the meeting, a Committee is appointed, with power to decide everything.

The fear is, that the Committee will think too much of what the memorial shall be, and not enough

of what it shall say. They will be in danger of studying the interests of the living more than the memories of the dead. They intend to make their town attractive. The improvement of its looks, its treasures, its health, is surely their duty. They can argue that the restoration of the market-cross, or the laying-out of the garden, is what the dead would have desired. The market-cross and the garden will improve the minds and the health of those whom the dead have left in the land of the living. What better use can be made of the town's Memorial Fund? It will bring pleasure out of pain, it will turn death to the purposes of life.

To all this talk you assent: yet you hesitate, half-conscious that it does not ring absolutely true. It sounds ungracious, unadventurous. Somewhere a long way off, like distant thunder, you hear the voice of Dr. Johnson—*Sir, let us clear our minds of cant.* To clear our minds, let us shake them up with a question. Memorials, nine times out of ten, are very large structures with very small inscriptions on them. Is that what you are wanting? Say that the fund has reached the sum of £300. How much of that money ought the Committee to spend on structure, and how much on inscription? Shall they spend, on the inscription, less than 1 per cent. of the money, or 5 per cent., or 50 per cent.?

It is a common error, in the designing of public memorials, to sacrifice inscription to structure.

Many are so ambitiously constructed and so shabbily inscribed that they look like trunks with labels pasted on them. Still, if the memorial be of one person, or of one event, a very brief inscription will suffice. Structures in memory of one person are of the nature of sepulchral monuments: they are tombstones disconnected from tombs. They may serve as clock-towers or drinking-fountains, but each of them belongs to a grave somewhere: the inscriptions on them are of the nature of epitaphs: and none of us admires long epitaphs. It is the same with structures which commemorate one event: they need no long inscription. Events die, as we die: they are buried in the past as our bodies are buried in the ground: or, if you prefer it, they are burned in the present as our bodies are cremated in the furnace. One event gone is like one person dead: it may deserve a monument, it cannot want a long epitaph.

But when we try to think of the War, all these notions about structure and inscription come to nothing. The War is not one person but millions of persons; not one event but millions of events. There is only one structure large enough to be a memorial of the War: and that structure is the world. There is only one inscription long enough: already it is cut across the world, cut deep, and longer and deeper with every hour of the War. You cannot have a War-memorial on the lines of a Jubilee-memorial. If every town in the kingdom were

stuffed thick with clocks and drinking-fountains, every fragment of old architecture rejuvenated, every patch of waste ground made into a garden, the War would still transcend it all. Have you read Mrs. Oliphant's book, "A Beleaguered City"? Do you remember what the dead, in that old French town, call themselves, in their message to the living? *Nous autres morts*, they call themselves. What memorial will your old English town offer, kneeling, to *ces autres morts*? It cannot commemorate millions of events, millions of persons. All that you can hope for, is to have a memorial of your neighbours, fellow-townsmen, who died on active service. Set your heart on this one group of men, not on bricks and mortar. Commemorate your townsmen, praise them, thank them, before you think of decorating your town. Subdue structure to inscription, not inscription to structure. You have their names: begin with their names. Spend the money over the inscription: have structure enough to support and frame it, and no more.

The poor names, which were printed once in a casualty-list, the type too small to read, the list too long to read, let them now be honoured in well-shaped legible gold letters, on great surfaces of veined and lustrous marble: not paving stone or slate or dull granite, but marble with glowing colours and storm-clouds fused into it while the world was red-hot in the making. Never mind what it costs; and have

enough of it for all the names in full, and sufficient space for each of them. With what money is left, emphasise the natural beauty of the marble; give it a sculptured border of delicate strong chisel-work, foliage, deeply undercut; sculpture such as you see, what is left of it, in the porch of the Temple Church: and perhaps a touch of mosaic-work near the border, such as you see on the shrine of Edward the Confessor: but perhaps the marble will look better by itself. Keep all this adornment under restraint; for it is the frame, not the picture. Only, have it the very best of its kind: entrust it to real artists, not to cutters of tombstones.

What more do you want? Surely, a note of heraldry, and some acknowledgment of the pride of a soldier's calling. Think how many of us, right up to August, 1914, did not properly respect the Army: what rubbish was talked and printed about "the military caste." Let your memorial, so far as it can, confess penitence for that disgrace, and offer some apology. Keep the town's arms and motto off it: put the regiment's arms and motto on it: entrust them to good artists in enamel-work: be extravagant of the money. Heraldry is extravagant: but it never is wrong, and it always is beautiful. What more? A few words of gratitude from the living to the dead; and a few words of praise from man to his Maker. Have them in English, not in Latin.

This memorial, probably, will be placed in a

church. But if a wall can be had or built for it in the High Street, or in the Market-Square, so much the better. There, it can have a bed of flowers in front of it. Why should it be in a church? Let it preach to the street: preach beauty to ugliness, thankfulness to thanklessness, and the acceptance of death to the fear of death.

If it is to preach beauty, it must be free from any taint of stupid conventionality: no emblems, no laurels or palms or crowns of life. Learn to distrust the stock emblems of life and of death. For that lesson, take the top of an omnibus along the Euston Road, and look at the stone-yards there: the jumble of anchors, angels, skulls, cherubs, broken lilies, broken columns, and urns. I say nothing of crosses: they are not emblems, they are heraldry: I am talking of urns. The only urns worth twopence are those which yield tea or coffee. Is it not monstrous, that our stone-masons, because people long ago put bones in urns, should still be putting urns over bones? Also, they put them on parapets and restaurants and railway stations, and wherever our architects cannot think of anything else to put. The total weight of solid stone urns, over all London, must be many hundreds of tons. They look like giants' inkstands. The column in Kensington, near Church Street, supports a most unmistakable inkstand: not an urn trying to look like an inkstand, but an inkstand trying to look like an urn.

Emblems, nowadays, are works of want of art: let none hinder the simplicity of your memorial. Surely, if you keep it simple, and give it the best of materials and the best of workmanship, it ought to please any town of 30,000 inhabitants.

But rival plans are up against it. One is for a window: the other is for a statue, or for "something in the nature of a statue." Consider first the arguments in favour of a window.

There is no fear that it will be ugly: the art of working in stained glass is well understood at the present time: you can reckon with confidence on a window of good design and good colour. All of us, by the kindness of Heaven, are able to enjoy colours: and that bit of a child which is in all of us takes especial delight in transparent colours, which live with light, and impart themselves to cold things far away from them. Some of us are fond, and some are too fond, of very quiet colours: like the lady who is said to have said of a flaming sunset that it was rather vulgar. Certainly, quiet colours are beautiful: but a world all of quiet colours would be invalid's fare: we must have loud colours, to please the bit of a child in us: I could play happily, this winter, with one of those little plaster-of-Paris edifices which we used to call "Italian images." They were sold, toward Christmas-time, in the London streets, after dusk, by Italian boys who carried them on trays: diminutive shrines, very white and steeply:

they had windows of red and green glass, and were lit-up with candle-ends, and I loved them dearly. Pictures are light painted; but stained-glass windows are painted light, which is even more beautiful: and the brighter it is painted, the more beautiful it is. We have come to be afraid of bright colours, because so many people wear them amiss. But stained-glass windows do not wear colours, but create them. *Let there be light*, they say, *and there shall be colours, we promise you.* It is true that ill-stained ill-arranged glass looks gaudy and hot: but we have better artists now: and you need not fear that your window, if you decide to have it, will be too bright.

Besides, a window is not only a display of colours: it is a page out of the world's best picture-book, a note on a great crisis of the world's life, an illustration of the world's dream which came true. There is room in it for fact and poetry and legend, all three of them together, without quarrelling. Year in year out, it radiates not colours only, but thoughts. And of a Sunday evening, during church-time, it reverses its influences, and will have nothing to say to this congregation here present, but gives its colours and its thoughts to the street.

Besides, a good window is a good work of art. It may happen to be the best work of art in the whole place; the one treasure of the church, the one gem of the town's collection, in a waste of advertise-

ments. Every town ought to possess a beautiful picture: none the less beautiful for being not on canvas but in glass.

Only, it may fail to be a good memorial of the War, and of the dead. The central figure will not fail: but the attendant figures will. The conventions of art will tend toward Bible-heroes or saints: for example, St. Michael, St. George: who will represent neither the War, nor the dead. Yet, if you were to have figures which would indeed be representative—if you were to have Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener—the window would not look well. It would not offend against reverence: but it would offend against art. The same objection would hinder the introduction of men in khaki. It would be beautiful, if it could be done without offence to art: but it cannot. The art of working in stained glass is very strict and very sensitive: its associations and traditions, its limits and restraints, are dear to it, and it cannot forego them.

The alternative plan, that the memorial shall be a work of sculpture, is beset by difficulties. Sculpture, in the atmosphere of our towns, soon loses its whiteness: bronze, on sunless days, looks grim and unfriendly. Again, though statues are "the right thing to have," they seldom appear to be perfectly at home in our streets: many of them seem not to know us but to be pretending that they know us. Again, the back of a statue is not worth looking at,

unless it be naked. These and other difficulties attend sculpture. Above all, there is the difficulty of the choice of a subject.

A memorial statue may take the form of somebody in particular, or of something in general. Figures of Victory, Peace, Fortitude, and the like, are statues of something in general. Have nothing to do with any plan for a statue of this kind. Our chief cities are heavily burdened with these creatures of imagination. They trespass on roofs where they ought not to be, they huddle in architectural spaces too small for them—Science, Art, Commerce, Agriculture, Britannia, Justice—commonplace figures, with nothing new or urgent to say to us. It is not possible to have an abstract figure to represent the War and the dead.

But you might have a statue of somebody in particular: a man in khaki, who shall stand for that group of men who went from the town to the War. Let him not be fighting: the War is over, and the dead are dead, and their names are inscribed below him where he stands: and he must be as quiet as a Greek monument in the British Museum. That mourning figure, in the room beyond the Elgin Marbles, which was looted from Greece and put over a Roman grave, has borne the test of more than two thousand years, because it is quiet. Statues restless or violent please us for a time, but cannot be sure of pleasing for all time.

This memorial, well designed and well placed, cannot fail of its purpose. It will be a good work of art; strong, passionless, effective; recording and recalling with perfect accuracy the look of the men who died, and the feel of the days when the War came into the town's life. The man in khaki will guard the pride and the honour of the town: he will consecrate that bit of the pavement: no filthy talk, nor chuck-farthing, nor drunkenness, will come within range of him: and he will plainly speak of the War, and of the dead. But, of course, there are questions about them which he will refuse to answer. We must not ask him to assure us that the War was over-ruled by Providence, and that the dead have gone away but not gone out. These two questions will be in our minds when we see him: but he will not answer them. *I have nothing to say about that*, he will tell us. *Here is the list of the men from here who were killed in action: you can read it for yourself: I have no further information to give you.* And we shall admire him all the more for his reticence. Only, if we could by any possibility have something able to give us some sort of answer to such questions, or some sort of help toward answering them for ourselves, we should be glad. For that reason, you will see, as a memorial, in this or that place, the figure of Christ on the cross: not shut in churches, but set in the open air. Some of us will salute it: and will say, as we said of the Daylight Saving Act,

Why didn't we have it before the War? It is singularly close to the War and the dead. As a work of art, it affords a good design for a memorial. In all art, there is no solitary figure so effective. It stands for a historical fact: it is quiet, strong, passionless: it allows no emblems, it needs no explaining, it speaks for itself. It is known to us as we know the look of our own faces: it has been a monument for these many centuries. Bad workmanship cannot spoil it: bad surroundings only heighten its value: a crucifix which would pass unnoticed in a church will reign triumphant over the whole contents of a pawnbroker's shop. It is absolutely simple, everlastingly outspoken. Voltaire's saying comes into my head, "If there had not been God, mankind would have had to invent Him." If there had not been the crucifix, mankind, after this War, would have had to invent it.

We hear talk of what our men will want and expect, after the War, in the matter of public worship. Comparisons are flying round, between French priests and English army-chaplains, between the Mass and the long-drawn English "morning service." One thing is certain: that our men now in France and Belgium will come back accustomed to the look of the crucifix. They have seen it on French roads, in French cottages and churches; seen it wrecked, seen it intact with everything round it wrecked; seen it kissed by the dying and laid on

the dead. They will not be shocked, when they come back, if they see it again: they will like to see it. The War is its own interpreter. French cookery, millinery, novels, farces—to these we paid attention, in the years that are gone. Lord So-and-so had a French cook, and Mrs. So-and-so got her hats from Paris. Now, out of the dawn, comes France, white to the lips with pain, and gives us, for a keep-sake, a crucifix: in remembrance of our dead and her dead, our misery and her misery, our faith and her faith. All other memorials will be national: but this, she says to us, will be international.

But would it not be better to wait till the men come home, and consult them, before you decide anything? There is no hurry. It would be dread-ful, if you put-up your memorial, and then they did not like it. Perhaps some of them already have been thinking and talking of it. You and I might amuse ourselves, trying to guess their thoughts. My first guess is, that they would prefer something beautiful to anything useful: they have not been seeing beautiful things, they have been seeing things ugly enough to drive you and me mad. They would not care, when they come back to the town, to be confronted by a clock-tower or a drinking-fountain. They would ask what the devil it had to do with the War. Let them have a voice in the matter: decide nothing, till you have heard from them.

Here is a tag for the end of this essay. The best

of all memorials of the War, and of the dead, is neither good architecture, nor good sculpture, but good conduct. The handsomest offering to be made by you and me is the amendment of our lives. Neither your life nor mine, as a memorial, is likely to attract much attention: but, at any rate, nobody can find fault with the design.

IX

THE NEXT FEW YEARS

Lately, matching my wits against one of my juniors, I became of a sudden too unsightly to please him. Something in the quadrupedal attitude, or in the look of a black hearth-rug worn as a fleece, was not to his taste: I had transgressed the line between what is delightful and what is dreadful: and he desired me to resume the likeness of a man. *Pax*, *Pax*, he cried. Then, as children will, he spelt the word aloud, to emphasise it. *Pax*, *I tell you: I say P, A, C, K, S—PAX.* And it may be that some of us take on our lips the name of Peace, as he did, without careful recognition of its meaning. We hope for Peace, pray for it, dream of it. Already, in the impassive streets, we imagine them adorned with flags and garlands, and at night illuminated. Next year, we say to each other, there will be Peace: and we say it not as prophets, but as lovers of the mere sound of the word. We have suffered for more than two years the misery of the War: suffered, I say, I who have

suffered next to nothing: it is not for me to talk of suffering. We pray for Peace. Yet, if we had to choose between the War and any sham or unstable Peace, we ought to pray for the continuance of the War. None of us doubts that the coming of Peace before its due time might be even worse than the going-on of the War to the end of its due time.

What image of Peace is in our hopes and prayers and dreams? That which comes first, in the foreground of the mind, is the bare thought of the War leaving off. We console and refresh ourselves, anticipating the happiness which will come to us on that day: the joy of waking, that morning, and saying to ourselves *It is all over: it really is*: and, with the thought of ourselves, comes the thought of our dead. Then we think of the living, how glad they will be to get back, and what a welcome there will be for them. Our furthest thoughts do not go far enough: the vision is too wonderful to be distinct: but we love to dream over it, how beautiful it will be: how the streets will be full of colour and music and shouting and thankfulness for the relief of Europe. But the quiet will be even pleasanter than the noise: we shall enjoy, even more than excitement, the sense of rest: surely, it will be happiness enough, and more than enough, to sit in a garden somewhere, all alone, on the day when Peace is declared. That is how we are dreaming, some of us.

There is no great harm in dreaming, unless it

impedes the traffic of our affairs. But if we are minded to dream, let us do it as wisely as we can. To-day, in every capital in Europe, and in every town of any importance, men are looking ahead, trying to think-out the problems of Peace, and to learn how to face and handle the difficulties and perils which will beset the nations. They are thinking their hardest: and it is certain that they are not thinking of shouting and rejoicing, nor of quiet and leisure. For the nations, after the War, will be left confused, impoverished, exhausted: they will be groping in a darkness of perplexities as heavy as that which now oppresses them. Imagine a town shattered by an earthquake, and the people, dazed and hungry, wondering how they will ever get things right again. You do not expect them to rejoice that the earthquake has left off. Besides, they say, it may come back: there may be another shock, at any moment. That is the fear which cuts across our vision of Peace: the fear that the War may come back, thirty years hence, fifty years hence. We dread, more than the going-on of War, the coming back of War. At the time of the South African War, we caught up the phrase Never Again. So it is with us now: we desire no Peace that will not endure from generation to generation.

In the strength of that desire we are waiting till the fullness of time shall bring us Peace worth having. The greatest War that the world has ever

seen is for the greatest Peace that the world has ever seen. All Europe has been ploughed-up by War: therefore the harvest of Peace must cover all Europe. For nothing less than that are the Allies fighting.

But how can Peace, of itself, create or bring forth anything? What do we mean, really mean, by the word? We are so apt to cheat ourselves with words. For instance, we talk of the blessings of health and of silence. But are these blessings anything more than the absence of sickness and of noise? Up to August, 1914, we were at Peace. Look back to the earlier months of that year: ask yourself whether there really is such a thing as Peace. It may be only a word for the absence of War: that is to say, a word to denote what sort of life we lead, when we are not thinking of War.

You and I, we two, in those earlier months of 1914, what were we thinking and doing? If Peace be something real, something which makes a real difference for good in our lives, surely we must have been behaving better, in those seven months, than we now are behaving. But I am confident that you have behaved better during the War than before the War: and you have no reason to doubt the same of me. Can you lay your finger on any good in your life, through the seven months, which was the work, in you, of Peace? Which of the ten commandments did Peace ever tell you to keep, or stop you from breaking? You can

lay your finger on the good that has come to you from experience, example, education, friendship, home: you are signed all over, like an autograph tablecloth, by these and other good influences which have made you what you are: but you will not find anywhere the separate signature of Peace. There is no evidence, either in you or in me, that Peace is anything more than a word to denote what you and I are, so long as War does not enter into our thoughts.

But we use the word in two senses. There is the leaving-off of War, and there is the absence of War: and we call both of them by the name of Peace. The one is the dawn, the other is the day. With the dawn, all the lost colours of earth and sea and sky are given back to us: the world begins to be warm again: the usual sounds and movements about the house start where they had left off for the night: and we pick-up all the habitual threads which we had let fall when the night came. Everything is just the same as it was yesterday. Only, the sunrise makes everything look fresh and significant: the night is gone: our familiar surroundings are back in their old places, but there is something magical about the way in which they are put back. Then, after breakfast, we think no more of the dawn. We discuss the weather, and the day's plans: so many hours of ordinary daylight for our ordinary work and play and meals. The dawn was poetry, but the day is prose.

The coming of the day was an event. The coming of Peace will be an event: we are waiting for it:—

> Out of the East it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street-lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the East was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the sun had floated up. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day was come, plain and garish.

See how Stevenson contrasts the dawn and the day: how he uses Milton's word, "day's garish eye," and Newman's, "the garish day." All three of them are agreed that the daylight, after the dawn, is commonplace. And some people say that Peace will be like that. We shall admire its coming: then we shall slip back into our old ways, and continue in them. We shall be at Peace, for we shall not be at War: but there will be no evidence in our lives that Peace is anything more than the absence of War. If this be so, there is no such thing as Peace. So soon as it has dawned, it fades into the light of common day, and nothing remains to be said of it: and that is all that Peace is: it is what we are, when War leaves us to ourselves.

But how long may a nation safely be left to itself? For we know, all of us, that Peace has its evils, no less than War. You might make a collection of what

has been said, by famous writers, in dispraise of Peace. It would be a strange anthology: a wreath not of flowers but of thorns and brambles: but you might easily make a worse book: and your quest would lead you on a course of good reading, among writings so far apart as the Bible-prophets, Ruskin, Tennyson's Maud, and Kingsley's Water-Babies. They are not so far apart as they sound: begin with them. Anthology-making, with the help of friends, is pleasant work. It may be that you would not find a public, nor a publisher: still, you would be making the only book of its kind.

This book of yours, this counterblast against Peace, would tell us—right or wrong, it would know its own mind—that Peace is more favourable than War to the love of money, the waste of money, and the parade of all that money can buy: more favourable to slackness, fads and crazes, restless idleness, slipshod talking and thinking: and, what is worst of all, more favourable to suspicion, ill-will, even downright hatred between class and class. It is Peace, not War, which entices us into letting things slide. War pulls us up, and pulls us together. Judge for yourself. Take a newspaper two-and-a-half years old, and to-day's paper, and compare them. Judge, so far as you can, the average level, then and now, of the nation's life, in business, politics, arts, and amusements: its output of faith, hope, and charity: the width of its range, the depth of its insight, the

strength of its hold over itself. You will find the level higher now than it was before the War.

But anybody with a pen in his hand can write pages in this vague style about things in general. What really concerns you and me is not the nation's life but our own lives: you concern you, and I concern me. These next few years will be a very difficult period. You and I ought to be able to say, now, before they begin, how we propose to behave in the absence of War.

Everything is in the melting-pot. That is a phrase which has lately been in great demand. Of course, you and I are included: you and I are in the melting-pot, we two atoms of the mass of its contents. But there are so many sorts of melting-pots, and of meltings: from the witches' cauldron to the refiner's fire. It is vexatious for us, to have to put everything into the melting-pot, without knowing what will come out of it. But we have no choice: things have gone-in of themselves, as Jason's aged father, in the Greek legend, went into the cauldron of Medea, hoping to renew his youth, but was destroyed. What will come out, of all that has gone in since August, 1914? What novel shapes and compositions of our national life shall we recover, during the next few years, from the War's melting-pot?

So far as you and I are able to read the signs of the times, they are hopeful. Doubtless, our hopes

are magnified by our faith, which prepares us to believe that things will on the whole go well; but it does not encourage us to imagine that they will go well of themselves, as it were by machinery. Only, as we see, in the changes now being wrought by the War in us, not chance but Providence, so we shall see Providence at work in the next few years. And Providence will use, for one of its chief instruments, the men who now are on active service. "The day is coming when the soldiers of England must be her tutors; and the captains of her army, captains also of her mind."

But you and I—what use will Providence make of you and me? Take me first. It seems to me, that my best chance of being useful is to rid myself of old prejudices, narrownesses, invented fears, and all such encumbrances of hope. Now take you. More depends on you: it is you, who are the important one, because you will be here longer. You are more likely to be useful if you proceed in the opposite direction. I have got to pull a lot of things up by the roots: you have got to plant a lot of things in by the roots. I have got my garden to weed: you have got yours to stock.

Of all the powers of the soul, that which will be of most help to you, in the coming years, is the power to understand other people. It sometimes goes by the name of sympathy: but it is less impulsive than sympathy, and more wise. For want of it, we were

breeding ill-will between class and class, breeding it in and in, right up to the time of the War. Pray for this gift of understanding. And, that you may be able to receive it, keep your life simple: keep yourself steadily under control, on the old lines of restraint and of patience. People who complicate and elaborate their own lives are the less able to understand the lives of other people: they find it so hard to get away from themselves. Be content with old and proven virtues, such as are now commended to us, even thrust toward us, by the War. Through the next few years, scarred with the wounds and stained with the blood of the years before them, let us go carefully; for we shall be walking over men's graves, having under our feet the wreckage of their homes. If in this world of the next few years, which has cost more than our world ever yet cost, we play the fool, we shall hardly deserve our lives.

On the chance that these essays may come your way near Christmas-time, I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year. Observe Christmas, but do not attempt to observe New Year's Day: there is nothing to observe. It is not like Christmas Day: it does not happen, it merely falls, on the first of January: it is not a Day but a date, without gifts, without beauty of its own or beauty of associations. Christmas Day we keep, New Year's Day we cannot keep. The only way to keep the New Year would be to keep it from start to finish. As the use of a

baby is to become a man, so the use of the New Year is to become a Year.

But keep New Year's Eve: see 1916 out, and 1917 in. On Christmas Day, you will find that the Old Year rallies, and is bright and cheerful, quite his best self, bearing himself with gentleness and humility very pleasant in one so old, with so much to be sorry for. After that lightening before death, he will sink rapidly: and in common decency we ought to watch at his death-bed. Not a sound in the house, nor outside: he dying silently, and we none of us wishing him to live longer. *Let him pass. The wonder is, he hath endured so long.* Then there will be the little ceremony, dear to quiet home-loving people, the opening of the front door, to let-in the New Year. Out of the darkness imposed on our streets by the War, out of the darkness which is in every hour of the War, the New Year will come into the house.

On the stroke of midnight, in this corner of London, four hooters are set going, and call to us through the darkness, from great works a mile or two off, with a fine aerial effect, like that of Beethoven's music for the four trombones. Lights here and there shine through the window-blinds: a murmur of good wishes is on the air: and, on the horizon of the sense of hearing, dinner-bells are rung and teatrays beaten, to imitate "a flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off." These queer fugitive noises, which on this one

midnight come to life, and play at the death of the Old Year as children play at a funeral, are delightful. If the front door were not wide open, and the policeman just outside, I would go down on my knees, as the New Year enters my house. At any rate, this next time, I will kneel devoutly, policeman or no policeman: believing that the New Year will not come alone, but will bring Victory and Peace.

When at last you see Peace, look into her eyes, touch her hands, kiss her feet, you will be so full of the joy of it that no thought of the next few years will be in your mind. Home will be too narrow for your happiness: you will be out and about the streets, wanting all London to play the accompaniment to your song of thanksgiving. You shall have music wherever you go, every house adorned for you, every lamp lit for you, every crowd catching you in its net and carrying you along. Let yourself be caught: do not think it beneath your dignity. You and I have not earned dignity enough to stand on: we have neither worked harder than other folk, nor endured worse. Besides, you cannot afford to miss the enjoyment of all London gone off its head with happiness. Into the crowd with you: lose yourself in it, find yourself in it: that is what youth and crowds are for.

Only, when the rush of tumultuous days is over, the bonfires burned out, the adornments taken down, the crowds back at work again—when the last of the processions has been through the roaring streets, and

the captains and the kings have seen what a welcome London can give to her friends, and have departed—then you and I have our own little recessional prayer to say: nothing grand, nothing vague: just a prayer for ourselves, you for you and I for me, that we may try to deserve what has been won for us: that we may try to be useful, for the sake of the men who fought and suffered and were not afraid of death.

Have pity on all men and women who now are unable to fill their days with work. They would give, many of them, half of the life which is due to them, or more than half, to be useful through the other half, every day and all day long. They try to get work, and there is none for them, none that they can do. They could not know what was going to happen. Right up to August, 1914, they seemed to themselves well adapted to the world, and it to them. Each day was sufficiently occupied. Life was neither hot nor crowded: sometimes it was rather slack, but not often: some of the occupations were silly, but only some, not all. Life was kind to these men and women, to whom now it is so unkind. They were neither like the wise virgins of our Lord's parable, nor like the foolish virgins: they had been careful to take some oil with their lamps, enough, they thought, to last. When they found what was happening, they went to buy more: and while they were gone, the door was shut: and they are still trying to buy, and the door is still shut. How could they know what

would happen? They had faithfully served the only world which they had. Then the War came, and took it from them: and not a few of them find the empty hours intolerable, and have tasted the bitterness of the saying, He that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath. Pity them, who envy you. This legion of the unemployed does envy you. Some of them knit stockings: some of them knit books: anything, which can be of any use to anybody.

You, more fortunate than they, have more work on your hands than you can get through. The War broke their world to make yours. By all that has happened since August, 1914, you are sworn, body and soul, to be of use to your world: and you will not find it easy. Nothing that you can do to fit yourself for that service will be more than you will need for it. *Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control* —these you will need at every step of your work: and reverence for others, and the divine gift of knowing what is in man. Your country has been saved for you. Your life may help to uphold your country's life on those heights to which it has risen: or may help to betray it back to that level from which it rose. Think daily of them who saved it for you: remember their loyalty, obedience, endurance. We talk of the darkness of the War: but the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: for we have seen what our men are.

Let one of them speak here. This morning, a letter came from an officer on the Western Front. It is dated September 26. "I should like you to write a book with Rudyard Kipling's *If* as its preface: a book of lessons from the war for boys and girls. There are such fine things to be learnt from our men, and they should be immortalised for future generations, to show what the Nation is capable of, and what our real character is. One could not have guessed it before the war. How often before the war did the subaltern without war experience ask himself the question, What will my men be like on active service? I could never picture the answer to myself. But I know now, and cannot be thankful enough that we are, what we are."

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